

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED

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- A MAGICIAN'S SWANSONG
- GREAT TRICKS REVEALED

** Out of Print.*

BY
WILL GOLDSTON

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED

INTRODUCTION BY
HORACE GOLDIN
PRESIDENT OF THE MAGICIANS' CLUB



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INTRODUCTION

By HORACE GOLDIN

President of the Magicians' Club

I AM sure that no one will feel inclined to contradict me when I say that no man has done more for the art of magic than the author of this book, my old friend, Will Goldston. By means of his series of magical books Will Goldston has awakened in the hearts of thousands of his fellow-men a real love of the art for which he lives, and in doing so has provided them with a splendid antidote to the cares and worries of everyday life. Magic is so fascinating that when one is really interested in any phase of it one becomes completely oblivious of everything else in the world, and it is for that reason that magic is the best of all hobbies ; it provides a perfect change from one's daily occupation.

Now, a lesson in magic is very much like a lesson in swimming. A novice often thinks that to learn to swim he must be carefully instructed by an expert swimmer, who will be near him to save him when he is in difficulties and tell him exactly how to move his hands and legs, and so on. Yet everyone knows plenty of swimmers who have never had a lesson in their lives ; they have picked up their knowledge from books and from hints given to them by friends.

In the same way plenty of people think that the practice of the art of magic is so difficult that it is impossible to learn it without a great deal of practice given under the eye of an expert teacher. Nothing of the kind. That idea is all wrong. The best way to learn to be a magician is to be one, and in order to be one all you need is a good

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book of instructions, time for practice, and a determination to go in and win.

Will Goldston has provided would-be magicians with plenty of instruction books, in which he has explained all kinds of tricks so clearly that the rawest novice can understand them.

The present book is, I think, one of Will Goldston's best perhaps—*the* best. I am quite certain that the man who cannot learn magic from this book will never be a magician. All kinds of tricks are clearly explained and, to make quite sure that his readers will understand every word, the author has supplemented his clear explanations of tricks with numbers of equally clear illustrations. Looking through the book I find that in many places the letterpress is hardly necessary ; the pictures " do the trick ".

I should like to add a word of advice to any young man who is making his first approach to magic by reading this book. I strongly advise him to concentrate on a few tricks at a time—only one to begin with—and to get the performance of each trick as nearly perfect as possible before he takes up the study of another. The man who performs only half a dozen tricks really well is a far finer magician than one who just manages to get through two dozen tricks. Quality—not quantity—is the thing to aim at. It is a mistake to suppose that the most difficult tricks are necessarily the best. Some of the finest tricks in the world are perfectly simple, but the simplest trick—I am not sure which it is—needs practice before it can be presented properly to an audience. Therefore, I say to all young magicians : Here, in this book, you will find plenty of material for your performances ; it is up to you to do your part and practise hard ; the author cannot do that for you.

I have the utmost possible pleasure in wishing a gigantic success to this book and long life and happiness to my old friend, its author.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED

CHAPTER I

SOME MAGICAL RECOLLECTIONS

I AM often asked what are the outstanding memories of my thirty-five years in magic—and quite as often, I am compelled to reply, “I don’t know.”

That is the truth, nothing less. When I cast my mind back to the beginning of the present century, to the hundreds of magicians I have met, to the innumerable magical performances I have witnessed in Britain, Europe, and America, I am quite at loss to name any one experience as an outstanding memory of my career.

I am, of course, a lucky man, for I have been contemporary with many of the greatest magical performers of all time. Houdini, Maskelyne, Devant, Lafayette, Hertz, Chung Ling Soo, Goldin—think of such men as these, think of what they have done for magic! And they are but a few of the outstanding personalities I have known and worked with. To declare that any one of them is pre-eminent is an injustice to the others.

When I look back to my early days, I think inevitably of the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly. And therein I find a host of memories, all worthy of the adjective “outstanding”.

Those who never knew the Egyptian Hall in its palmy days cannot adequately appreciate all that it stood for in magic. That tiny theatre, with its incredibly small stage, and its intimate “drawing-room” atmosphere, was

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the shop window of the world's magic, and to have played there bestowed a prestige equivalent to the eighteen-carat mark on gold. The magician who performed at the Egyptian Hall was not merely regarded as good. He was a master.

A modern audience would regard those old programmes of the Egyptian Hall as unimaginative. None the less, they had a tremendous appeal to the public of the time, and served an invaluable purpose, not only to the magicians who participated in them, but to magic as a whole. Maskelyne and Cooke were, of course, the proprietors of the hall, and what John Nevil Maskelyne did not know concerning public taste was not worth knowing. His was the guiding hand behind the policy of the theatre. Cooke was something of a nonentity, throughout his life being somewhat sadly overshadowed by the strength of Maskelyne's personality.

It is not generally known that the Egyptian Hall was the second London headquarters of Maskelyne and Cooke. They met in their home town of Cheltenham, Gloucester, and for eight years toured the provinces, their best illusion being a "spirit" cabinet, with which Maskelyne cleverly imitated the so-called "spirit" séances of the famous American performers, the Davenport Brothers. On April 1, 1873, Maskelyne and his partner came to the St. James's Hall, London, intending to play a three-months season before returning to the provinces. Their success was so great, however, that when their short lease terminated, they moved to the Egyptian Hall, where they remained for thirty-two years. Maskelyne was fortunate in obtaining a long lease on the theatre at a very small rent.

The performances at the St. James's Hall, and the earliest performances at the Egyptian Hall are beyond my memory. I can, however, recollect something like twenty years of the shows at the Egyptian Hall, for, like everyone interested in magic, I was a regular attendant there. In all that time, the general *format* of the programmes never varied to any great extent. Nearly always

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there was a pianist, two lesser-known magicians (who were paid only £10 a week), Maskelyne's plate spinning, which was very expert indeed, one or two illusions occupying the better part of an hour, and a magical sketch. Cooke, the other partner, usually took a minor part in these magical sketches—that was all the public ever saw of him. I believe his official post was that of wardrobe master.

A feature of the theatre in those days was a number of musical instruments suspended from the roof, and which at intervals during the performance appeared to play of their own accord. The idea was Maskelyne's, and served him well for many years. It was generally believed that these instruments were electrically controlled, much in the same way, I suppose, as the modern cinema organ is controlled. This explanation probably satisfied the audiences as much as it satisfied Maskelyne. It was, in fact, quite wrong. The effect was actually obtained by musicians "planted" near the instruments, but carefully concealed from the auditorium. The suspended instruments never gave out a note.

David Devant once told me that he owed much of his success to his appearances at the Egyptian Hall. He certainly had many notable triumphs there—and, of course, later at the St. George's Hall, Langham Place, when Maskelyne took him into partnership.

Devant's first stage illusion was a startling change of a man into a woman, known as "Vice Versa"—suggested by the book of that name by Mr. Anstey. This was performed on the stage of the Opera Theatre, Crystal Palace, and attracted Maskelyne's attention. It was found, however, that the apparatus was too big for the stage of the Egyptian Hall. Devant, undaunted, invented "The Artist's Dream", in which a picture came to life, and Maskelyne built the illusion and produced it in a sketch at the Egyptian Hall, permitting Devant to play a small part. Nearly thirty years later, Devant revived this same effect, touring the provinces with considerable success.

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In my opinion, Devant was an infinitely better illusionist than Maskelyne. That is really no reflection on Maskelyne, whose success for the better part of half a century is sufficient testimony to his inventive skill and business acumen. But Devant in many ways was in a class quite by himself : in fact, I do not think genius is too strong a word to apply to him. He was skilled in all forms of sleights, had a charm of approach to his audiences which I have never seen equalled, and was an illusionist second to none. He invented nearly all the illusions he used—which is all the more remarkable when one considers he had very little knowledge of mechanics.

I pride myself on a long memory, but I doubt if I can recall offhand more than a quarter of the remarkable illusions Devant produced during his long association with Maskelyne, so numerous were they. Besides "Vice Versa", and the "Artist's Dream", which I have mentioned, there was "The Birth of Flora", in which a flower borrowed from a member of the audience became a basket of roses, and eventually a girl ; "The Enchanted Hive", a giant bee illusion, used in the burlesque of a dramatic sketch ; and "Beau Brocade", an astounding effect, which disappeared a girl from Devant's arms, and caused her to reappear in a box on the stage. "The Burmese Gong" showed the magical transference of three assistants placed in cabinets on the stage, and "The Magic Cloak" was an ingenious change of dresses worn by a lady assistant.

Other of Devant's illusions that come to mind as I write are "Valentine's Eve", being the production of a living valentine figure ; "The New Page", in which an assistant was strapped in a cabinet, and then discovered upside down ; "The Indian Rope Trick", a clever imitation of the alleged Oriental trick of that name ; "Diogenes", an elaboration (by means of a tub) of a small tube and handkerchief vanish ; "The North Pole", a figure change ; "Chantecler", an egg-production ; "The New Chocolate Soldier", an automaton effect ; "Dyno", a spirit hand that played dominoes

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with the audience, and invariably won (this was constructed as a reply to Maskelyne's card-playing automaton, "Psycho"); "The Mascot Moth", a disappearing illusion of great ingenuity; "Bogey Golf", whereby Devant won or lost games with the audience as he pleased; "The Window of the Haunted House", a vanishing effect suggested (but not invented) by the late Julian Wylie; and "The Fairy Grotto", a production effect which formed part of a magical sketch.

Any trick or illusion performed at the Egyptian Hall was certain of immediate success when shown in the provinces. Certain magical depots in London at this time had a habit of describing tricks in their catalogues as "Recently performed at the Egyptian Hall", or with some such similar eulogy. Devant's "New Century Handkerchief Trick" was imitated and described in this way, but the article sold to the public bore scarcely any resemblance to the original effect. Most of the Egyptian Hall performers suffered in this way, and on a number of occasions outstanding illusions seen at the theatre were reproduced in America in every detail, without the original performer's permission. The practice is not so common to-day, but there is still room for improvement in the laws covering patents of magical illusions.

But to return to my Egyptian Hall memories. De Kolta performed there, and laid the foundations of a great reputation in Britain and in the United States, where his fame preceded him. I regard this little Frenchman as one of the finest magical inventors the world has known—who can forget his "Disappearing Bird Cage", used years afterwards by Carl Hertz, and "The Expanding Die"?—but he was certainly not in the front rank as a performer. He had no use for showmanship, such as it was understood by Maskelyne, and his personal appearance was grotesque. He invariably wore a dress-suit that was several sizes too big for him, and his sides bulged with very obvious "loads". With his thick, Imperial beard, and the mane of hair brushed away from his high forehead, he had more the aspect of a clown than

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a conjurer. A modern audience would have been convulsed with laughter at him.

One of the most popular artists who ever appeared at the Egyptian Hall was Paul Valadon. I have seen many great sleight-of-hand performers in my time, but I have never seen one who could surpass the inimitable Paul. He was of German extraction, and started his business career as a hairdresser's assistant in London. Later, when he became a professional magician, he worried Maskelyne for many months before he was granted an engagement at the Egyptian Hall. There, he never made the mistake of becoming an illusionist. He was a master of small effects, and it was for his superb artistry in this respect that the public flocked to see him. With his wife to help him, he also performed a very fine thought-reading act—though this was hardly up to the standard set in later years by the Zancigs. Valadon went to America at the invitation of Harry Kellar, and died in Arizona in 1911.

How many people to-day remember the name of Charles Morritt? I have never understood the reason why this brilliant man so soon faded from the memory of the London public, for there was a time when he was a serious rival in popularity to Maskelyne himself. Tall, fine-looking, faultlessly dressed, he was something of a *matinée* idol thirty-five years ago—probably the only *matinée* idol of his time who was a great artist, too. Morritt was a brilliant inventor (the amazing lightning disappearance, aptly titled "Oh!" was partly his), and many of his illusions were effected by complicated arrangements of mirrors. As an inventor of mirror illusions, he has certainly never had an equal.

Like Valadon, Morritt performed a thought-reading act, but I was never impressed by it. I think the truth was that thought-reading never afforded him the opportunity for showmanship that was to be found in his illusions, though, curiously, he seemed scarcely to realize this. But my outstanding recollection of Morritt is of his "nose for news". Any person who was a newspaper

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sensation of the day was invited to appear with him on the stage. The claimant to the Titchborne fortune was such a one, I remember, and the bills that Morritt put out at the time filled the little Egyptian Hall to capacity.

Until a few years ago, Morritt was still touring the provinces with one of his best illusions—"The Convict's Escape". But owing to failing health and advancing years, he has retired now. No doubt like myself and many another, he sometimes sits and dreams of those many triumphs of his in the long ago.

The appearances of Martin Chapender at the Egyptian Hall are particularly vivid in my memory, because Chapender was my closest friend at the time of his all too short triumph. As far as my recollection goes, he was the only man who has become a star performer immediately on entering the profession. Chapender's speciality was sleights—and what a magnificent performer he was! When Nelson Downs, the American coin manipulator, came to London at the beginning of the present century, he told me that Chapender had shown him a dozen moves which he (Downs) had not only never seen before, but would have put down as utterly impossible had he not seen them for himself. After two or three seasons at the Egyptian Hall, Chapender contracted meningitis, from which he died within a fortnight.

In 1905, Maskelyne's lease on the Egyptian Hall expired, but he was able to obtain a lease on the St. George's Hall, Langham Place. The opening venture at the St. George's Hall was a magical play called "The Coming Race", and this proved to be one of the few failures—and probably the biggest—staged by J. N. Maskelyne. He was quick to learn from experience, however, and soon returned to the style of programme he had produced at the Egyptian Hall. Supported by Devant, and an army of other accomplished magicians, he played to crowded houses almost up to the time of his death.

After some years of close association with Maskelyne, Devant went on tour, his place being filled in the St. George's bill by Charles Morritt. Morritt's illusions of

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"The Vanishing Donkey", "The Boy Scouts", and "The Pillar Box" were as brilliant as anything he had done at Maskelyne's old headquarters. He also specialized in a purse-trick sleight—a clever adaption of the old race-course swindle.

When Morritt launched out in vaudeville, and severed for all time his connection with Maskelyne, Devant was understudied by a brilliant man named Arthur Ainslie. He was an excellent patter magician, and proved so good that he was retained in the bill for some years. Another good patter worker at the St. George's Hall was Frederic Culpitt, who had previously been known as Cull Pitt. He proved very popular—chiefly, I think, because of his snappy style of presentation, which made a welcome contrast with the more ponderous methods of the older magicians, such as Maskelyne himself. Culpitt's best illusion was known as "The Doll's House", and it is noteworthy that he is still using this effect with considerable success.

Edward Victor, who was also prominent with Maskelyne, is another magician who is still going strong. Victor was a master of sleights and hand shadows—I believe he was the first man to introduce to the public the novelty of coloured hand shadows. To me, it seems a pity that in recent years shadowgraphy has lost its appeal—no doubt talking pictures and broadcasting are responsible for that. Victor is still one of the best hand-shadow artists in the world, and I am glad to know he is able to obtain vaudeville engagements even in these depressed days.

Then there was Douglas Dexter, a magician with a dramatic style of presentation that was, and is, unique. In this respect, I think Dexter was the most "serious" magician I have ever seen; and his policy succeeded because it reflected a genuine earnestness and enthusiasm for magic. He worked a brilliant thought-transference act with an assistant, besides performing a number of sleights. Of the latter, I remember best his "Golf Ball and Bag".

Both Horace Goldin and De Biere appeared at the St.

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George's Hall, though not, I believe, until they had been promised a percentage on the box-office receipts. Goldin featured his well-known illusion "Sawing a Woman in Half", which drew all London to Langham Place—according to a famous newspaper critic at the time. De Biere, too, enjoyed a most successful season with his delightful sleights, and an illusion called "The Dress Box".

"Costume" performers were the exception rather than the rule with Maskelyne. I never discovered why this was, but being a "straight" magician himself, he probably had a greater sympathy with those of his kind. Okito was one of the exceptions at the St. George's Hall. Though a Dutchman—his father had been appointed conjurer to the Royal Court of Holland—he appeared as a Chinese, and a most brilliant performer he was. One of his illusions, the production of plants, flowers, and birds, from a rush mat he folded before the audience, was absolutely baffling. In addition, Okito was a most polished conjurer, and could do some truly amazing sleights with coins, thimbles, cards, and billiard balls.

The more I write, the more do memories crowd upon me. What memories they are!—Herrmann, Yetmah, Suzette, James Wakefield, Nikola, Selbit, Chris Van Bern, Stanley Collins, Allan Shaw, Herbert J. Collings. The last named, besides being a most polished magician, was a marvellous plate spinner, equal in dexterity to John Nevil Maskelyne himself. Collings is still an active performer, though I believe he does little plate spinning in these days.

There was Lewis Davenport, too, a beautiful manipulator of the billiard balls, who could produce illusions worthy of the best at St. George's Hall. Oswald Williams was another—his illusion entitled "The Diamond Queen" was a sensation. In this, Miss Ray Warwick, the assistant, appeared in a dress made up from thousands of stones—so heavy that she had great difficulty in walking under its weight. Cecil Lyle, with his aptitude for artistic invention, produced some beautiful effects, be-

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sides demonstrating a dazzling skill in sleights and misdirection.

Nor must I forget the names of Herbert Milton, Wilfrid Allan and Edward Proudlock, whom I introduced to Maskelyne. Milton was a card specialist, and his four-ace trick with a houlette was one of the best things that appeared on the stage of the famous theatre in its latter days. Proudlock presented a graceful act in seventeenth-century costume, specializing in the Chinese Rings and the Sympathetic Silks. He is still probably one of the finest manipulators of the rings in the world.

John Nevil Maskelyne died in 1917. From then until 1924, his son Nevil carried on, his best illusions during that time being "The Spirits are Here" and "The Haunted Window". On Nevil's death these same effects were utilized by Captain Clive Maskelyne, John Nevil's grandson, whose sudden death in 1930, whilst on a voyage to undertake film-work in the tropics, came as a great shock to the public. The last of the Maskelyne family to appear at St. George's Hall were Noel, Jasper, and Mary, all children of Nevil Maskelyne.

There is something more than usually sad in the recent news that the properties and illusions of Maskelyne's Ltd. have been sold. To speak of such an event as the death-knell of Maskelyne's is perhaps unkind, and not strictly true, for that illustrious name will live as long as magic lives, and Jasper Maskelyne continues as a considerable force in vaudeville. But to those who knew the Egyptian Hall, in its hey-day, the sale of the Maskelyne properties comes almost as a shock. It is the end of a great regime in magic.

Maskelyne's peak year at the St. George's Hall was coincident with a general boom in magic. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the bulwark of vaudeville from 1890 to 1910 was magic pure and simple. This was the period that witnessed the rise of some of the greatest magicians the world ever knew or is ever likely to know.

There has been no greater attraction in vaudeville

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than the peerless Harry Houdini. Yet Harry's introduction to British variety was as disappointing as any man's could be. He came over from the United States, billed as "The King of Kards"—in his early days card manipulation was his speciality. When he applied to the Alhambra Theatre for a booking, he was required to give a demonstration before a director of the theatre named Moule. The demonstration was a failure, and no booking was forthcoming. Thereupon Houdini promised to accompany Moule to Scotland Yard, where he said he could escape from a number of regulation police handcuffs in a matter of seconds. He kept his promise, much to Moule's astonishment, and was given an early date at the Alhambra.

Houdini's success as an escape worker gave rise to a considerable number of imitators performing on almost identical lines. To keep these men off the halls, Houdini induced his brother Hardeen to come over from America, and obtained for him a contract to tour Britain on an opposition circuit. Hardeen, though an escape worker, used a programme that differed from Houdini's in several essentials, and to some extent, at any rate, Harry's purpose was achieved.

It was in 1902 that Horace Goldin created his profound sensation at the Palace Theatre, London. King Edward, who had recently ascended to the throne, was so interested in Goldin's magic that he attended the theatre five times in a fortnight, and, on one occasion, went round to the stage door, accompanied by Queen Alexandra, to interview Goldin. There followed an invitation to perform privately at Buckingham Palace, and a theatre was specially constructed in one of the State Rooms so that the full theatre programme could be reproduced. After his astounding six months' run at the Palace, Goldin's salary rose to £400 a week, and he was granted contracts extending over a period of seven years.

Lafayette was another of the great names of the time. Like Goldin, he crowded many illusions into his act, but in a manner different from any other performer. I doubt

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if the like of Lafayette's performances will ever be seen again. He had a military band on the stage with him, and besides his magic, gave impersonations of Sousa, and other well-known conductors of the day. His illusions are far too numerous to recall, but I remember "The Bow and Arrow", "The Girl in the Bath", and "The Sculptor's Dream" as being amongst his best.

Servais Le Roy preceded Goldin and Lafayette by a good many years, but he was performing at the same time as them, and his brilliance was in no wise dimmed by their popularity. Le Roy, a Belgian, first came to England as a youth, and performed mostly at parties and social functions. A very fine sleight-of-hand performer, he soon made headway, and after a time he was teaching magic at very high fees. Many men destined to become famous through magic were his pupils—notably David Devant. Later, Le Roy undertook vaudeville work in partnership with a lady coin manipulator and a comedian, the act being known as Le Roy, Talmar, and Bosco.

Mention of coin manipulators reminds me of T. Nelson Downs, that superb American conjurer, who started life as a booking-clerk in a railway station in Iowa. "King of Coins" was what Downs labelled himself, and it was an apt title—for he was undoubtedly the greatest coin magician of his time. He was the first to use that very difficult sleight, the back and front palm, and his "Miser's Dream", involving the production of many hundreds of coins, although often imitated, has never been equalled. It was a magnificent and almost incredible effect. As an encore, Downs used to perform with cards, but his sleights here were scarcely to be compared with his coin work.

Another of the army of American invaders about this time was Howard Thurston—"The Man who Mystified Herrmann". To describe Thurston as a great card manipulator is merely to re-state what is already well known. He was to cards what Downs was to coins, and I believe he introduced to Britain the back palm with a card, the sleight that later Valadon used so successfully. It is generally believed that Thurston laid the foundations of

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his reputation in Britain, but this, strictly speaking, is not so. He is famed to-day for his illusions, and it was in India that he first worked his larger effects on a respectable scale. From India he went to Australia, then back to America, where he eventually joined forces with Harry Kellar.

It is my opinion that Carl Hertz was never the equal of other great ones who came from America. He was a fair performer at sleights, but certainly not the equal of Downs or Thurston, and Goldin was an immeasurably better illusionist. Hertz made himself famous because of his superb powers of showmanship, and his specialization in three or four very fine effects, amongst which "The Vanishing Bird Cage" was notable. This effect, as I have stated, was invented and performed by De Kolta, but in Hertz's hands it became almost a new trick.

The sensation caused by Hertz, when he performed the trick before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, is still fresh in memory. It was a triumph in which I was happy to assist him, and which shed a welcome ray of light into the twilight of his latter years, when his powers had dwindled. There are not many, however, who will recollect Hertz's earliest performances in London. It is a common occurrence nowadays for vaudeville performers to "double" two houses in one night—i.e. play two performances at two theatres in the same night—but I doubt if the record of Hertz in playing five variety theatres each day for an entire week will ever be equalled again. My memory is a little hazy as to dates, but I think this was in 1890, or thereabouts.

Chung Ling Soo, the Chinese magician, is another whose face and name is undimmed in the public mind. And little wonder—for in his own particular branch of magic, Soo has never been equalled. He was a magician and inventor of the very highest class, and no words of mine in praise of him can be too extravagant. I witnessed scores of performances by Soo, and never once did I see him guilty of anything that could possibly be considered second-rate.

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Apart from his magic, Soo was a first-class actor. For many years he hid his real identity and nationality beneath his stage pseudonym, and up to the time of his death, many of his acquaintances believed him to be a genuine Chinese. His name, as a matter of fact, was William Elsworth Robinson ; he was a Scots-American, and I believe the nearest he had ever been to China was eastern Germany.

Soo's death was a real tragedy. He was shot, during a performance of the illusion known as " Catching the Bullets ", on the stage of the Wood Green Empire, London, early in 1918. One of the few truly gifted magicians surviving from the golden era of magic, his loss to the profession, as to the public, was incalculable.

How many people to-day recollect the names of Melot Herrmann, Walter Pursword, Hartz, Denno, Hercat, Rameses, and Sydney Lee ? None of these men, with the possible exception of Hartz, was in the first flight of magicians, but each, in his own way, was capable of giving a sound and thoroughly entertaining demonstration of magic. Melot Herrmann was a German, and a splendid showman. I always thought that with a little better application to his business, he would have done very well indeed. Unfortunately, besides using very old tricks in his programmes, he had a rather stupid habit of running across the stage and posturing, rather in the style of a ballet dancer. Herrmann's finale was invariably a production called the " Flags of all Nations ", and he managed this beautifully, old trick though it was. From a silk ribbon " throw out ", which he jerked over the auditorium and then pulled back, he produced a number of small flags ; and from these, in turn, he produced a giant Union Jack and Stars and Stripes, each on a flag-pole. With suitable martial music from the orchestra, this effect was an excellent curtain to his show.

Walter Pursword was one of those courageous men who relied on extempore patter. I describe him as courageous because he had no outstanding gifts as a patter magician, and I am sure he would have done

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better had he taken the trouble to learn his speeches by heart. None the less, some of his card effects were excellent—one, I recollect, was known as the "Card Star", a clever discovery of selected cards at the five points of a huge star on the stage. Had he lived longer, Pursword would probably have progressed much further, and might even have become a big money man. He was still quite young when he was drowned, while bathing, off Sheerness, Kent.

Another card specialist was Sidney Lee. While not particularly gifted in sleights, or as an illusionist, Lee was a wonderful thrower of cards. I have seen him jerk a card from the stage to the gallery, dropping it within a yard of the person whom he had indicated. In this form of dexterity, I certainly never saw anyone to compare with him.

Hartz (who is often confused with Carl Hertz) did not make much progress until he introduced his trick known as "Le Chapeau du Diable". In this he would walk on to a stage completely empty except for a number of tables, and borrow a hat from a member of the audience. When his performance was ended, the stage would be filled with objects apparently taken from the hat—silks, flowers, flags, bird-cages and so on. The effect was obtained, of course, by skilled loading, and the use of *servantes* on the tables. Hartz made quite a name for himself with it, and would have done better still had he concentrated on better patter and better showmanship.

As an illusionist, the refined Hercat was superior to Hartz—yet here again there was something missing, some little inspiration which is all the difference between two classes of magic. Some of Hercat's illusions were excellent, and one, called "The Blue Room Mystery", was so good that Harry Kellar reproduced it, detail for detail, in the United States. I think Hercat's essential handicap was his lack of discrimination. He could not define the difference between a good effect and a bad one, and his programmes presented the queerest assortment of magic imaginable. Denno, too, was of this same type. He

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had a most polished style of presentation, and although all his tricks were purely mechanical in operation, some were really effective judged by the standards of his day. But only some. At least half of Denno's effects were poorly elaborated amateur tricks. His best, I think, was "The Dove and Ring", in which a borrowed ring was disappeared from a cabinet, and discovered round the neck of a dove concealed in a bottle.

Probably the most successful "mechanical" magician of all time was Rameses. After a varied career as a kosher butcher and a small-part actor, he decided to become a magician, and was fortunate in being able to purchase cheaply the complete act of Professor Harcourt. He adopted an Egyptian dress, and unsuspected powers of showmanship made him quite a success in both Britain and America.

But now my memory is bringing me to more modern times. There is Albini, dead now but not forgotten, whose achievements with the Egg Bag made him a top-liner wherever he played. I have seen many accomplished performers with the Egg Bag, but none to equal Herbert Albini. He was superb. In Britain he specialized in small effects, but when he went to America he opened out with illusions, though the Egg Bag was always his masterpiece. Incidentally, I might say Albini was an Englishman: he was born at Manchester, under the name of Lasky.

Frank Van Hoven, whose performances of burlesque magic caused more laughter than most other comedy acts put together, has likewise joined the great majority. Poor Frank!—ever since childhood, it had been his ambition to be a really great magician in the style of Howard Thurston—but he simply was not good enough. He became a burlesque player by accident—and it was as well. His trick succinctly named "Ice!"—there has been nothing funnier on the stage or screen—would have been lost to us had his inmost desires been realized.

Two other magicians of modern times, Chefalo, the Italian, and Murray of escapes fame, are, I am happy to

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say, still working, and doing very well. Chefalo, from very small beginnings, has built up an impressive and most picturesque act. He has toured the world on several occasions, and I think I am right in describing him as the most popular European magician of our time.

Murray, whose real name is Walters, is an Australian. He is a very fine artist indeed, comparable, in my opinion, with Houdini. I can think of no greater praise than that. He lacks, however, something of Houdini's showmanship: his act is less flamboyant, less of a spectacle than the great American's. But Murray's performances do not suffer in the least on that account. He is the greatest escape worker living to-day.

CHAPTER II

POCKET TRICKS

EVERY magician should have a large repertoire of pocket tricks and keep himself always in practice with them. I know that that is sound advice and that to carry it out is not easy, for the simple reason that good pocket tricks are scarce. Directly a good effect of this kind is invented and put on the market it is pounced on by magicians all over the world, and so a great many pocket tricks soon become common property; everyone has seen them. Long before that time arrives the wise magician is thinking about the next batch of novelties.

I have often thought that many professional performers do not take pocket tricks seriously; if they happen to come across a good one they will acquire it, but they do not take the trouble to search for others of the same kind. This is a pity, because a good little effect is often very useful.

So long as people can see the trick they are not concerned about its size. Sometimes a magician may be called upon to perform in a room which is not suitable for large effects; in such a case half a dozen first-rate pocket tricks will be very welcome.

Pocket tricks also come in useful at Press shows, or after a dinner, or in the smoking-room. I know that there are magicians who consider that when a man is engaged to give, say, a performance for one hour, he should give it—and no more. But that is a very short-sighted policy, and I am sure that audiences appreciate a performer who is willing to give them a little more than they have actually any right to expect to have. The magician who is willing to show a few little tricks after

POCKET TRICKS

he has finished his regular performance creates the impression that he is an artist, so much in love with his art that he is never tired of practising it. On the other hand, the performer who gives exactly what he is paid for and no more is apt to make people think that he is a very mercenary man and more than a little churlish !

It is a good plan to keep a record of all the pocket tricks one knows. Notes should be made, not only of the effect of each trick, but also of the method employed to bring about the effect—the “secret” of the trick. Tricks are easily forgotten, and it is always as well to be able to refresh one’s memory when necessary.

Unfortunately, nearly all amateur magicians start off by learning a few pocket tricks, and so the secrets of a great many of these little effects are well known. It is therefore advisable to be on the look-out for the latest novelties and to keep one’s repertoire up to date.

May I add—for the benefit of any beginner who may be reading these lines—that even the simplest of pocket tricks, even those which seem to “work themselves”, should be practised carefully before they are shown. Many amateurs make the mistake of thinking that because a trick is only a very small one they need not pay much attention to it. The wise magician, on the other hand, knows quite well that he can add considerably to his reputation—and therefore to his bookings—by a good presentation of half a dozen little tricks.

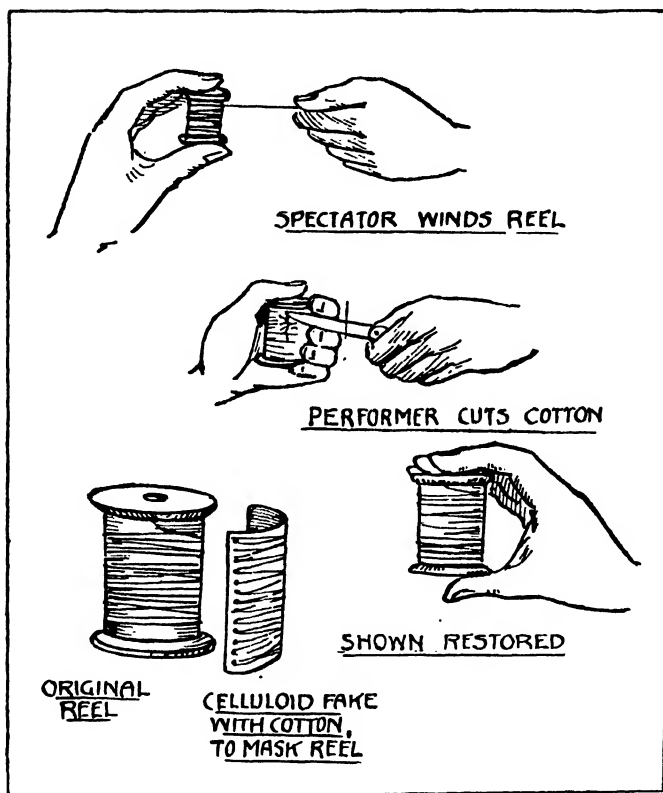
And, having been behind the scenes of the magical world for a great many years, I can assert, without any fear of contradiction, that some of the most ingenious tricks in the world are little things that can be carried about in one’s waistcoat pockets.

The reader will find some of the very latest novelties in this section.

THE CUT AND RESTORED COTTON

A spectator is asked to examine an empty cotton-reel and then to wind a long piece of cotton round it.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



THE CUT AND RESTORED COTTON.

POCKET TRICKS

The performer takes the reel and runs a sharp knife down the cotton ; everyone can see that the cut is genuine. Having pronounced the magic spell and waved his hand over the reel, the performer hands it out again. The cotton is now in one piece again and anyone may remove it from the reel and examine both the reel and the cotton.

The secret consists of a little "shell" of celluloid, coloured to resemble the reel and having some cotton fastened to it. (See illustration.) At a convenient moment the performer, having palmed the fake in readiness for the trick, works it on to the reel. To the audience the reel has not been altered in any way.

The performer then cuts down on the cotton attached to the fake and, after the audience have seen for themselves that the cotton has been cut, the performer palms away the fake and the trick is done.

THE MONEY-BOX

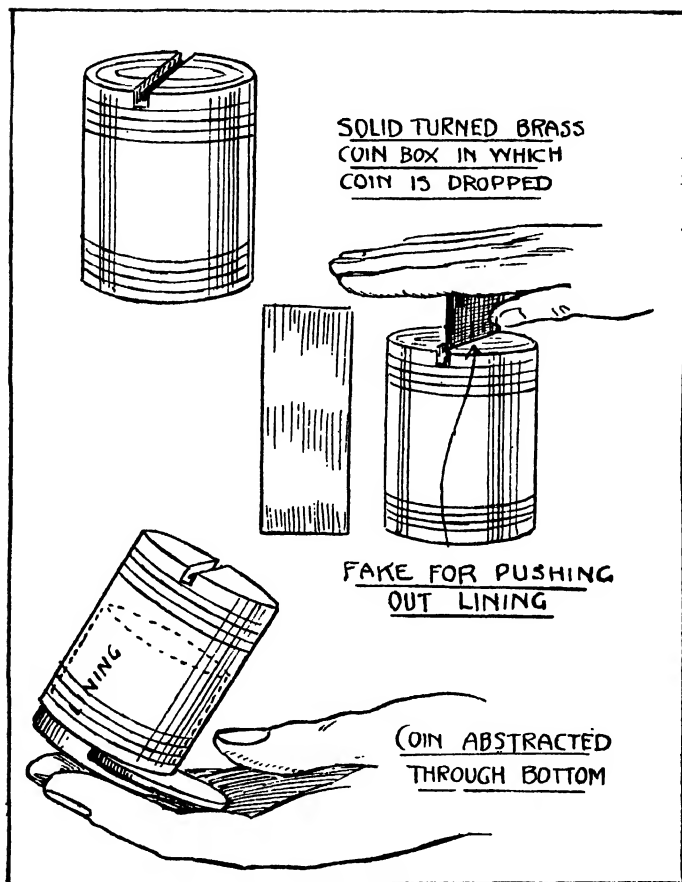
Here is a little piece of apparatus which can be used as a trick by itself or with other things in any trick in which the performer has to get possession of a coin in a magical manner.

The money-box can be given for examination. Someone is asked to drop a coin into the box. The performer holds the box behind his back and immediately throws the coin on the table and gives the box out for examination again.

The illustration gives the trick away. It is impossible to open the box without the flat key (kept in the hip pocket). With this key the outer cover of the box can be turned and then raised, so that the coin drops out into the hand in the way shown in the illustration.

Of course, before showing the box again the performer locks it up and puts the key back in his pocket.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



THE MONEY-BOX.

POCKET TRICKS

CHANGE !

The effect of this pocket trick is so simple that a very young child can understand it.

The performer puts a half-crown into the hand of a member of the audience, who is asked to close his hand directly he feels the coin. He does so. The performer then asks him if he is certain that he has the half-crown. The answer is sure to be "Yes". The performer then asks the assistant to open his hand and—behold!—the half-crown has been changed to a penny.

It is a "clean" effect; the performer has nothing to "get away with".

The illustration shows how the half-crown is prepared for the trick; the penny is concealed inside it, but it slips out directly the performer wishes it to do so. And as the faked half-crown is connected with a piece of cord elastic to his wrist it disappears up his sleeve.

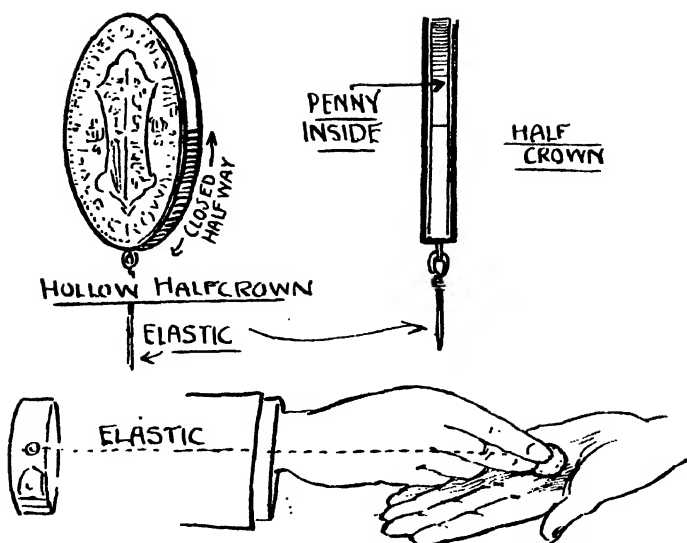
A very neat little trick.

A MYSTERIOUS MATCH-BOX

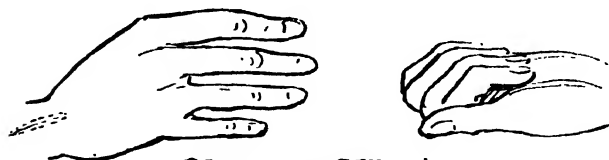
Having pushed open the drawer of a box of matches and shown that the box is nearly full, the performer calls attention to two small holes in the centre of the cover of the box. He pushes a match right through the box and pulls the drawer out a little way and pushes it back again. At the conclusion of the trick he again shows the drawer of the box.

There is a slit in the centre of the drawer, but this can be concealed when the performer wishes to hide it by means of a little cloth flap with a weight in it. After he has shown the drawer with matches in it the performer tilts it on one side and this movement causes the flap to fall out of the way of the slit in the bottom of the drawer. To enable him to get a good portion of the drawer into view the drawer is fitted with a piece of elastic, as shown in the diagrams.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



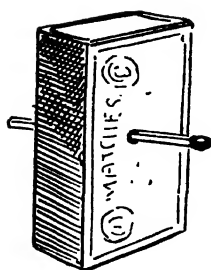
PLACING HALF CROWN IN SPECTATOR'S HAND



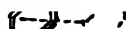
PENNY IS LEFT IN
SPECTATOR'S HAND

CHANGE!

POCKET TRICKS

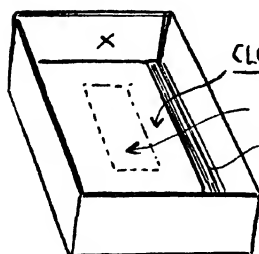
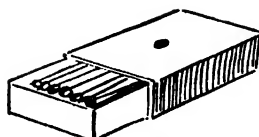


MATCH BOX PIERCED



THUS

BOX SHOWN
WITH MATCHES



CLOTH FLAP

HOLE

WEIGHT

MATCHES

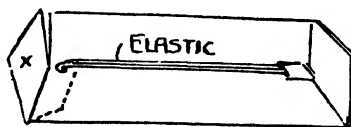
FLAP

WEIGHT

HOLE

DRAWER TILTED

ONE END OF
DRAWER OPENS
TO ACCOMMODATE
PRESSURE



A MYSTERIOUS MATCH-BOX.

G R E A T T R I C K S R E V E A L E D

At the conclusion of the trick the performer removes the match and takes out the drawer, tilting it as he does so. The flap covers the slit in the bottom of the drawer and the matches are in position again.

A R E G U L A R T W I S T E R

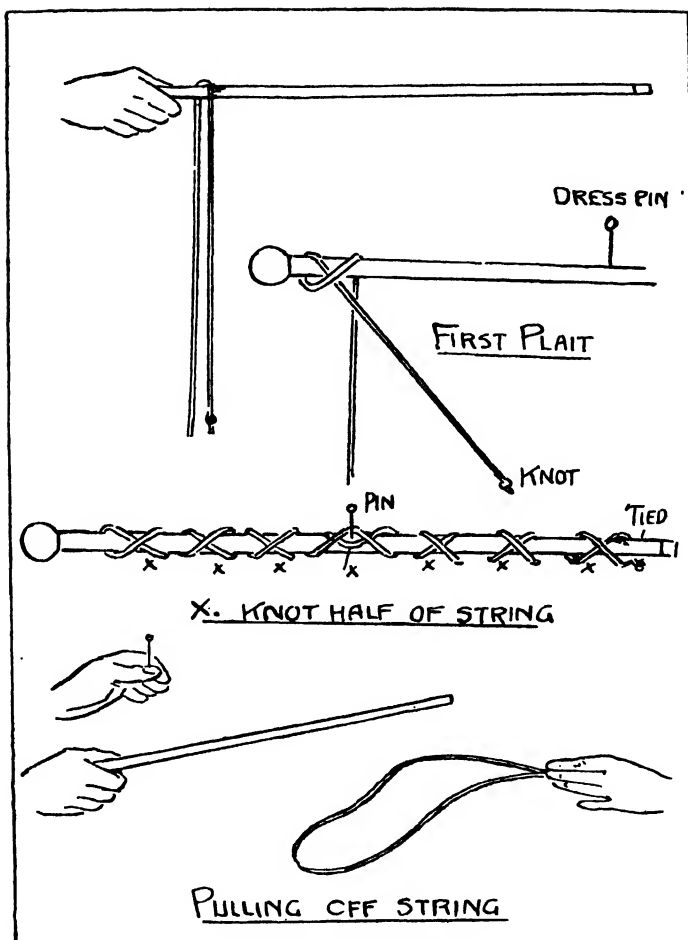
In one sense this trick is perfectly easy ; yet a good many magicians, I am sure, will find that it is not too easy. It needs plenty of rehearsals, but when once it is mastered it cannot go wrong, for the simple reason that it works itself.

The performer borrows a walking-stick or an umbrella and sticks a dress-pin into the centre of it. He then twists a piece of string round and round the stick or umbrella (see illustration) and ties the two ends together. Taking the pin with his left hand and the knot of the string in the other, he pulls out the pin and the string comes away. The effect is excellent, and the performer can safely allow anyone to try it, for unless the secret is known the trick is practically impossible ; some beginner may succeed accidentally in doing it once, but he will certainly not be able to repeat the trick.

The secret is simple. One " side " of the string must be kept next to the stick all the time and there must be an even number of twists on either side of the pin. The artist has drawn three twists on either side of the pin, but I advise the beginner to start with only one until he has got the " hang " of the trick. It will be noticed that one end of the string has a knot in it. This is a help to the performer when he is twisting the string quickly round the stick ; all he has to do is to remember that the knotted end must be next to the stick.

If the learner will start with only one twist on either side of the pin he will see at once what really happens ; the second twist unfastens the first and, but for the pin, the string would come away at once ; the pin holds it in place ; directly the pin is taken out the string can be pulled away from the stick.

POCKET TRICKS



A REGULAR TWISTER.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED

I can assure the reader from experiences I have had with this little trick that the effect is very good.

A GOOD SHOT

A nice little trick that works itself. The performer stands a cigarette on the table. He places a match-box about a foot away from it. Then he takes a safety-match and wraps a little piece of silver paper tightly round the head of the match.

The next thing to do is to set fire to the silver paper and await results. The match flies backwards and it should knock down the cigarette. If it should happen to miss, the performer can explain that the trick is badly named; it should be called "A Bad Shot".

THE HYPNOTIZED CIGAR

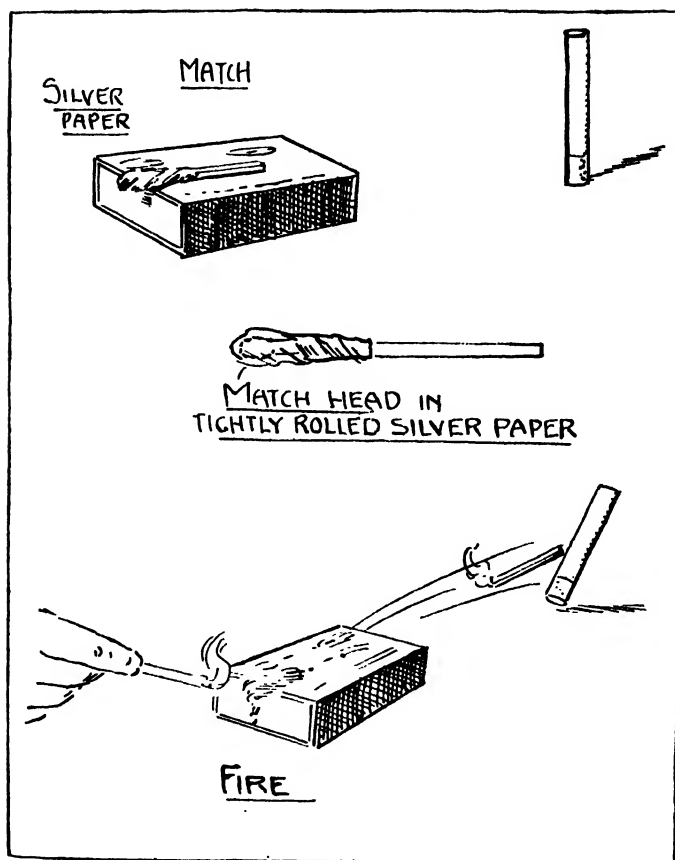
No cigar routine would be complete without this very puzzling effect.

A cigar is laid across two tumblers. (See illustration.) The performer picks it up, rolls it between his hands for a moment and then separates his hands, leaving the cigar resting on the fingers of the right hand. Then the performer suddenly turns his hand over and the cigar clings to his fingers. He can wave his hand about, but the cigar remains in its first position—close to his fingers.

Once more the performer rolls the cigar between his hands and then repeats the trick with the left hand; at the conclusion he can give the cigar out for examination, or—better still!—give it to a member of the audience who has been assisting him in a trick. Everyone will soon see that the cigar is an ordinary one, for the man receiving it is sure to smoke it.

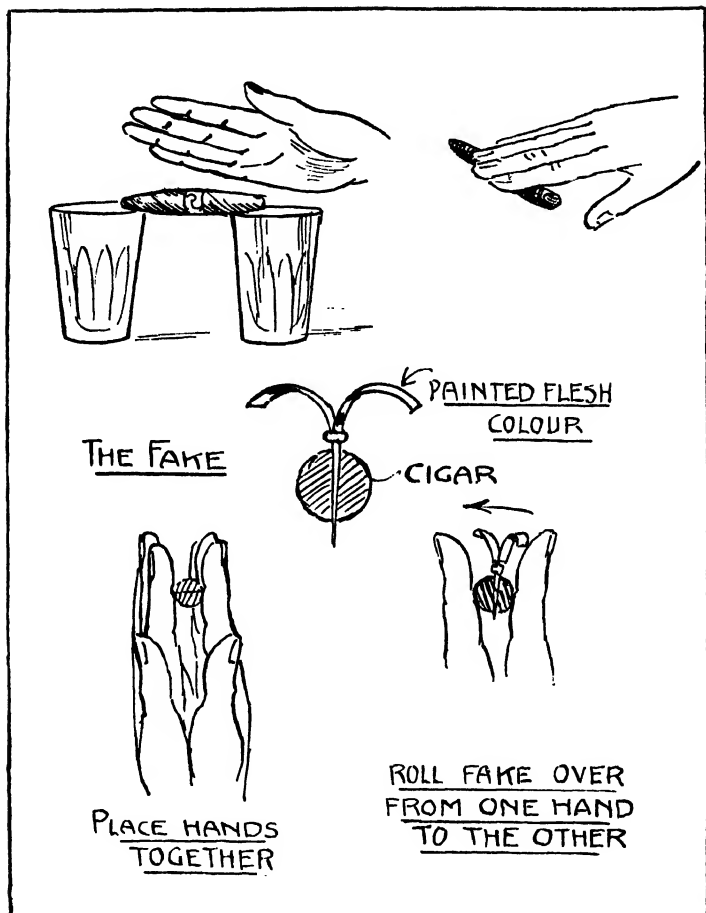
This excellent effect is brought about by the use of a small fake—a small fine pin with two bent wires at the top of it; the wires are painted flesh colour. (See illustration.) When the performer has this in his hand he picks up the cigar and goes through the preliminary moves

POCKET TRICKS



A GOOD SHOT.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



THE HYPNOTIZED CIGAR.

POCKET TRICKS

already mentioned. The fake is held between the second and third fingers, and the bent wires coming over the fingers prevent it from slipping away. At the right moment the performer merely presses the pin into the cigar and—the rest is easy. When the hands are put together again the fake can easily be rolled over to the left hand.

THE JUMPING MATCH

The performer holds his left hand out flat, and places a match in the centre of the palm, in a line with the middle finger; being a good showman, the performer pretends that the position of the match is very important; it must be exactly in line with his middle finger.

Holding another match in his right hand, the performer slowly passes this match down the middle finger of his left hand until the head of the match touches the match on his hand; immediately the match flies from his palm.

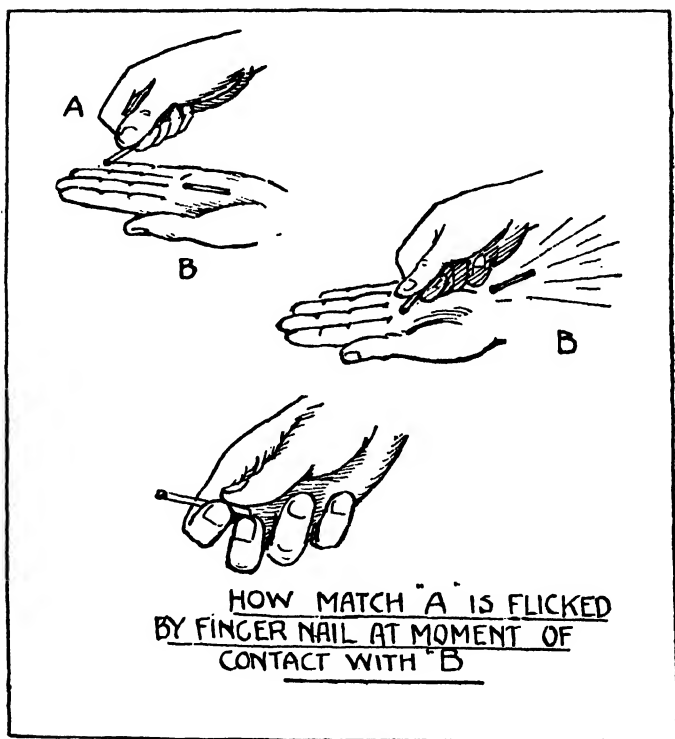
On paper there seems to be nothing in this little trick, but I can assure the reader that in practice it is very effective.

Directly the match held in the right hand touches the other match the performer secretly flicks away the match by using the nail of his middle finger. (See illustration.) A very little pressure is needed to make the match fly for some distance.

A NEW TORN STRIP RESTORED

Every magician of experience knows that it is often advisable to have more than one method of doing a trick. Very often some small effect, such as "The Torn Strip of Paper Restored", will create such an impression of mystery that the magician will be asked to repeat the trick. Perhaps the request will not be made until the performer is ready to leave, and all his props are packed up. To refuse what appears to be a very small favour will seem to the person asking it very ungracious, and the wise per-

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



THE JUMPING MATCH.

POCKET TRICKS

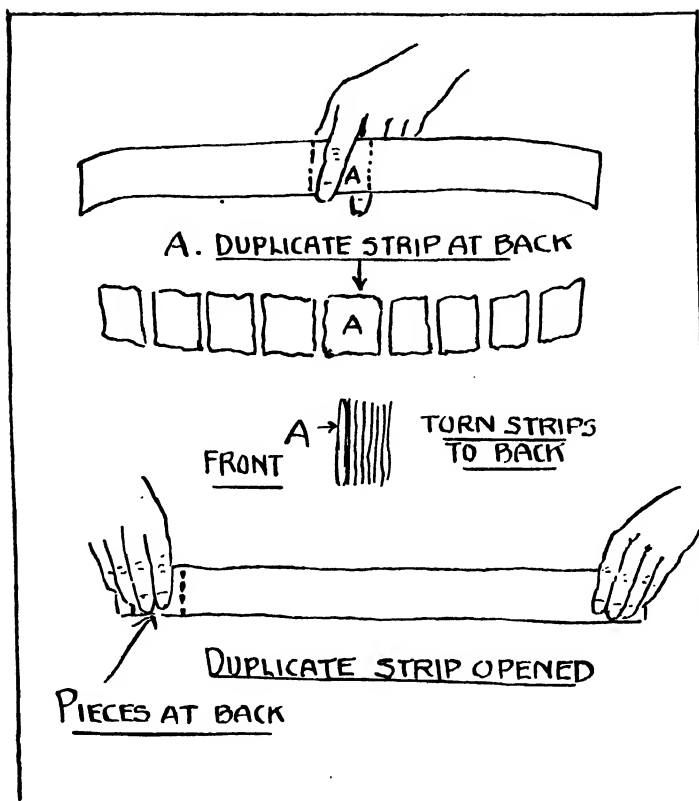
former, who knows that it is up to him to make a good impression both during and after his performance, provides for such an emergency by having a few small props in his pockets. He may be asked to repeat a trick which scarcely bears repetition, and in that case he will make some excuse and offer to show the guests another little trick. If he should be asked to repeat the trick of "The Torn Strip Restored", he should have no difficulty, for there are several methods of bringing about this effect, and here is still one more—and a very good one.

In this case the strip is about fourteen inches long and three wide. Gummed to the centre (in a way which will be explained presently) is a duplicate strip folded up. The performer comes forward with the strip between the first and second fingers of his left hand; the duplicate is hidden by the fingers, and the strip can be displayed—back and front.

The strip is torn in the usual way—first in half, then in quarters, and so on, until there is a small packet of pieces the width of the folded strip. The top and bottom of the little packet are turned inwards, so that there is a square, exactly the same size as the duplicate strip when it is folded up. Both packets can be shown as one. The performer unfolds the duplicate strip and the pieces are hidden behind it, but in an ingenious way, so that the restored strip which is shown to the audience appears to be unprepared.

If the reader will turn to the illustration he will see just where the duplicate strip is gummed to the other strip. The duplicate strip is not pleated in the usual way, but is folded "over and over" from one end into a parcel about an inch wide. Then a little piece of the top and a little piece of the bottom are folded inwards and the result is a neat square parcel. This parcel is gummed to the centre of the other strip in such a way that if it were undone the two strips would be at right angles to each other. If the reader will bear that fact in mind he will see at once what happens when he produces the restored strip at the end of his trick; the torn pieces

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



A NEW TORN STRIP RESTORED.

POCKET TRICKS

are concealed behind one end of the duplicate strip which is shown to the audience, and therefore the performer can show the whole of the strip (apparently), for his fingers hide the faked part.

Possibly the reader will not appreciate the value of this method until he has tried it ; when he has done that I am quite certain that he will add it to his repertoire.

THE MAGICAL MATCH

I am indebted to Horace Goldin, the famous illusionist, for this capital little pocket trick. The performer offers a cigarette to three friends and takes one himself. Then he finds that he has only one match. He strikes the match and from it produces three other lighted matches with which he lights his friends' cigarettes.

If the reader will examine a cardboard match in a "book" of matches he will see that it can easily be stripped into four. The performer prepares the match by dividing it almost up to the head. The match can then be shown as one match, but directly it is struck it can be divided into four matches and each one will be alight.

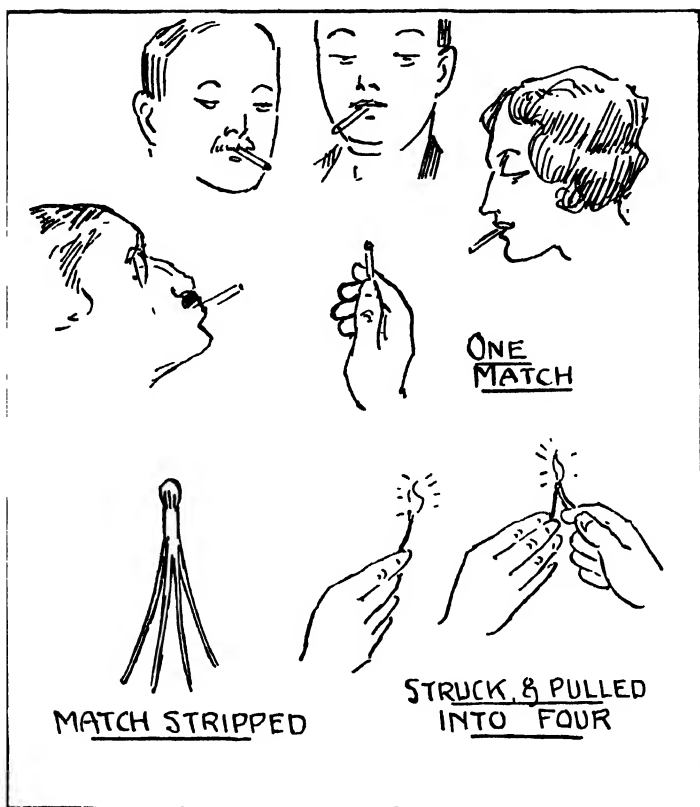
A KNOTTY PROBLEM

A key or ring is tied on a piece of string ; the ends of the string are passed through holes in a little slab of wood and two beads are then tied to them so that the ends cannot be passed back to the other side of the wood. The little problem requiring solution is to untie the knot, leaving the key, or ring, hanging on the string.

This is more of a puzzle than a trick, but it may come in useful at times when the performer is asked by his host or hostess to "teach the children a trick".

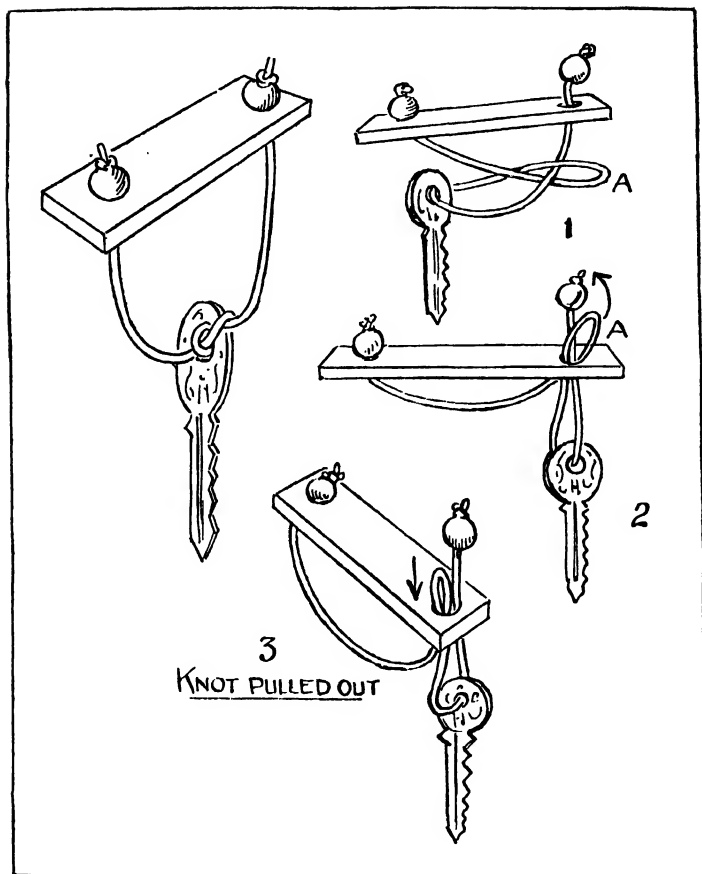
I am quite sure that no written explanation would be half as satisfactory as are the three diagrams given here ;

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



THE MAGICAL MATCH.

POCKET TRICKS



A KNOTTY PROBLEM.

G R E A T T R I C K S R E V E A L E D

they show exactly how the puzzle is solved. The knot is passed through one of the holes in the wood and over the end of the string. That little move unties the knot and the key is left hanging on the string.

CHAPTER III

ROUTINES: THIMBLES

A PRETTY SLEIGHT WITH A THIMBLE

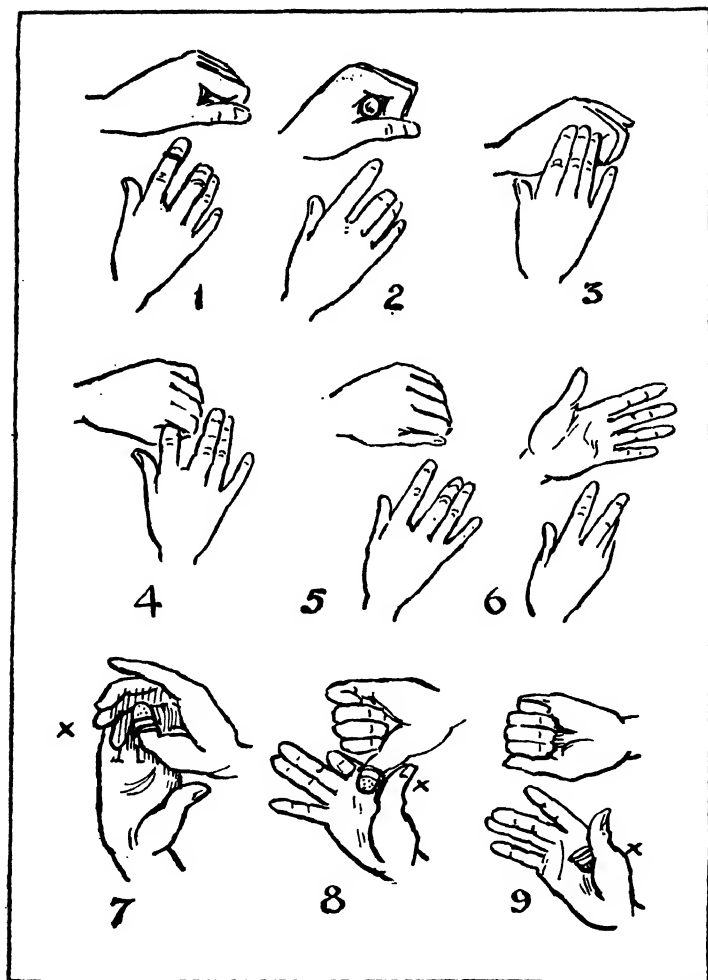
I AM indebted to my friend John Ramsay, the noted Scotch sleight-of-hand conjurer, for permission to publish his Thimble Routine.

There are two good points in this sleight. The trick is performed very slowly, and so every move seems to be quite fair ; secondly, the thimble is secretly transferred from one hand to another in an unusual way. If the performer has presented the usual " production of eight thimbles " and has made use of the customary palm, he will bewilder his audience completely with this sleight, because it is done in another way.

The effect, of course, is simple enough, and it is clearly shown in the drawings numbered one to six. The performer has a thimble on the first finger of his right hand. The left hand is shown to be empty and is then closed. The first finger openly puts the thimble into the closed left hand, and the audience see it there. (See Fig. 2.) The fingers of the right hand give the thimble another pat (Fig. 3) and then the first finger pushes the thimble in a little farther (Fig. 4). Here comes a little surprise. The first finger is withdrawn from the left hand and anyone who expected to see the thimble on the tip of that finger is disappointed. The thimble is apparently still in the left hand ; then that hand is quickly opened and the thimble is quickly produced on the tip of the right first finger.

All is fair until the hands are in the position of Fig 3. Under cover of the right hand the left thumb goes into

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



A PRETTY SLEIGHT WITH A THIMBLE.

ROUTINES: THIMBLES

the thimble. Fig. 7 shows the move. When the right first finger apparently pushed the thimble farther into the hand (Fig. 4) the left thumb secretly pushed the thimble into the usual "palm" in the right hand (Fig. 8). The right first finger then produces the thimble, the left hand being shown empty.

THE PUZZLING THIMBLE

Here is a little trick which is distinct from the usual run of thimble tricks in that the thimble is not placed on any finger. The trick—or puzzle—is most suitable for performance at the closest quarters.

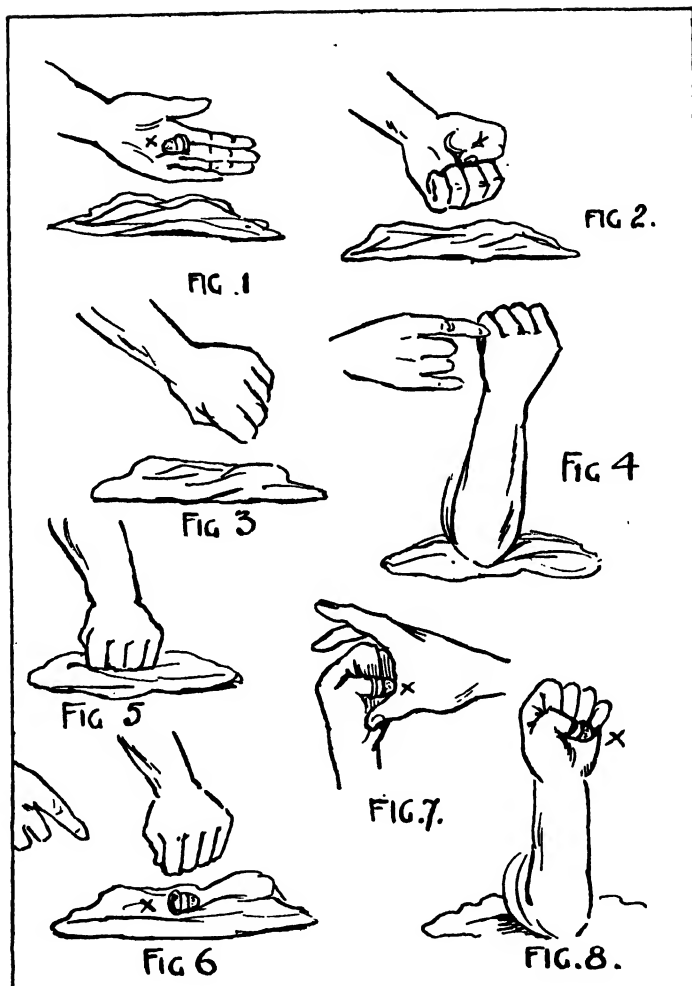
The performer leads off by openly placing the thimble in the left hand (Fig. 1). Note the position of the thimble; the performer apparently tosses the thimble carelessly into the hand but he knows that it must be in the right position, and the right position is shown in the sketch. The left hand is then closed and clenched tightly. The performer calls attention to the fact that the skin of the hand is stretched over the back of the hand and over the knuckles; the slightest movement, if he were to relax the pressure, would be observed by everyone. He then puts his closed fist on a handkerchief and once more calls attention to the fact that its appearance has not changed in any way. He then lifts his fist and shows the thimble on the handkerchief. Puzzle: How did it get there when the hand was tightly closed all the time?

Anyone who claims to be able to solve the little mystery receives the thimble from the performer who can be fairly certain that anyone who does not know the secret is not likely to be able to do the trick.

Then will come the usual request: "Do it again." As a matter of fact, this is just what the performer wants, because he has another ending to the puzzle.

The first movements are repeated, and once more the performer calls attention to the fact that the skin is tightly stretched on the back of the hand and on the knuckles. In Fig. 4 we see the positions of the hands at this point.

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THE PUZZLING THIMBLE.

ROUTINES: THIMBLES

With the right first finger pointing to the closed left hand the performer is able to get his right thumb secretly into the thimble and so take it out of the hand. (See Fig. 7.) Then, while all eyes are on the left hand as the performer places it on the handkerchief, and while everyone is expecting to see the thimble there when the performer raises his hand, the performer has plenty of time for a little secret work. He draws the thimble off the thumb with his second and third fingers and puts his first finger into it; then he palms it in the usual place at the root of the thumb and is so able to produce it at the end of the first finger.

Some performers may prefer a slightly different way of getting the thimble into place for the final production. All hands are not alike; in fact, no two hands are quite alike, and moves which are simple and easy to one performer may be very difficult—almost impossible—to another. If the reader will glance again at the position of the hands at Fig. 4 he will soon understand the second method of getting the thimble into place. The left thumb is worked into the thimble and, under cover of the right hand, sticks it down into the fork of the right thumb, from which place the performer produces it. It is a good little trick with which to bother the "knowing ones".

CHAPTER IV

CIGAR AND CIGARETTES

CIGAR AND CIGARETTE TRICKS

CIGARETTE tricks are very popular nowadays, especially with fashionable audiences. The magician who wishes to be abreast of the times cannot afford to do without a few good tricks of this kind ; to be obliged to say " No " when one is asked if one does tricks with cigarettes is a big mistake nowadays.

May I warn any performer who is going to take up this very interesting branch of magic that when people ask for tricks with cigarettes they mean tricks with real cigarettes and not with little sticks with white paper gummed round them to make them look like cigarettes. Dummies of that kind certainly make some sleights fairly easy, but—if one is playing at close quarters the dummies give themselves away. Besides, people are apt to be inquisitive after a trick with cigarettes and to ask if " they are ordinary cigarettes " ; they may even go farther and ask to handle them.

Another piece of advice. The performer should accustom himself to use cigarettes of different sizes, and both flat and round cigarettes ; in short, he must be prepared to perform, if asked to do so, with any cigarettes that may be given to him.

It will be understood that I am not suggesting that the performer should never use faked cigarettes. Sometimes a cigarette that is slightly faked will help one considerably, but the cigarette should always appear to be the genuine article.

With cigars one need not be so particular. Everyone

CIGAR AND CIGARETTES

knows that cigars are more substantial than cigarettes, and, the prices of good cigars being what they are, perhaps people will not be surprised to find the performer using dummy cigars made of wood coloured to resemble real cigars. Still, if the performer does not mind the extra expense of using real cigars, I should strongly advise him to do so, especially with a series of manipulations with cigars. Should he drop a dummy wooden cigar the little "thud" heard by the audience will rather give the game away and destroy the illusion.

Cigars to be used for a series of manipulations should be torpedo-shaped, but some tricks require the use of straight cigars. No harm is done by the performer using cigars of both shapes during a series of cigar tricks, and he need not apologize to his audience for doing so!

A word about cigar manipulations—a series of sleights during which cigars disappear and reappear in a magical manner. A few of these manipulations will amuse any audience, but a few too many will bore them. To an ordinary audience practically all disappearances and reappearances of a cigar are the same. The performer may delude himself into believing that because the various sleights are different to him they must be different to his audience. The audience do not wish to see what is, to them, the same thing over and over again. Many a card manipulator makes this mistake; he gives the audience more than they want—a fatal mistake.

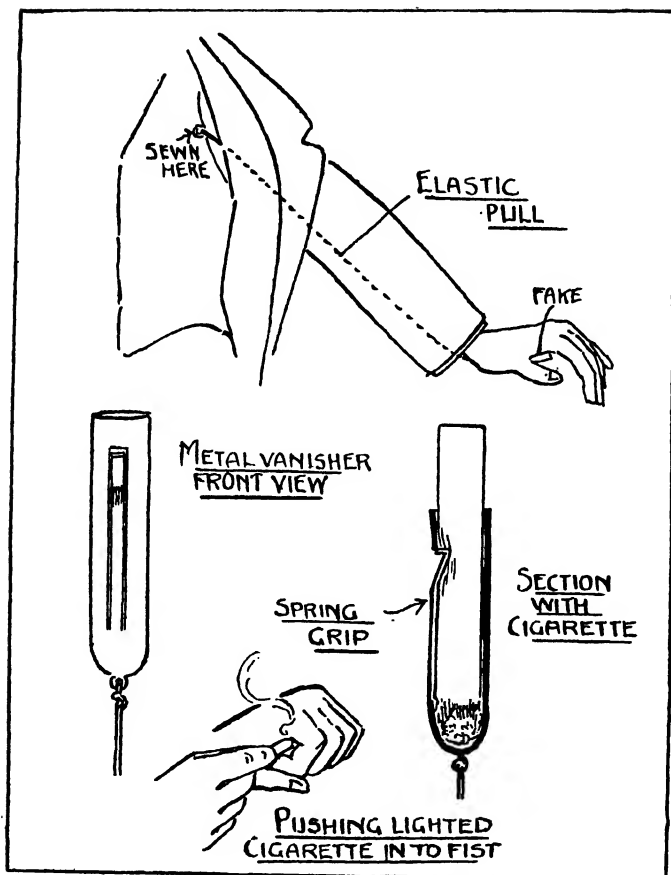
Both cigarette and cigar tricks are excellent for after-dinner and smoking-concert performances, and although practically all the jokes that can be built up round cigars have been used again and again, the average audience still smiles at them.

VANISHING A LIGHTED CIGARETTE

Here are details of a good vanisher for use when one wishes to make a cigarette disappear magically.

A small metal tube with a spring grip just inside it, and a piece of strong cord elastic, are the only things required.

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VANISHING A LIGHTED CIGARETTE.

CIGAR AND CIGARETTES

The free end of the elastic is sewn to the left arm-hole of the waistcoat, and the vanisher, attached to the elastic, is passed down the left sleeve. When the performer is about to present the trick he secretly gets possession of the vanisher and grips it at the base of the left thumb. (See illustration.) The left hand is then closed and the cigarette pushed into it, lighted end first. The cigarette goes straight into the vanisher ; the performer releases it, and he can then show both hands empty.

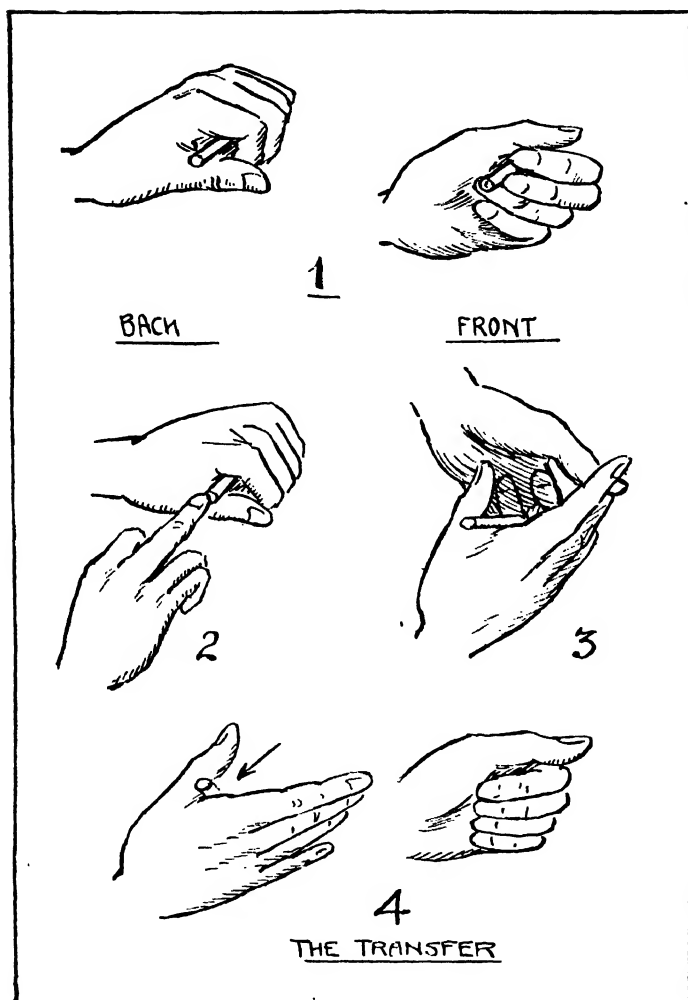
MANIPULATIONS WITH A CIGARETTE. THE TRANSFER

I have called this sleight " The Transfer " because during its performance the cigarette is magically transferred from one hand to the other. The performer closes his left hand and, with his right middle finger, pushes a cigarette into it. The left hand is raised and the right hand passed over it. The left hand is then opened and shown empty ; the cigarette is in the right hand and can therefore be produced from the performer's elbow, or any other place that he prefers.

Fig. 1 shows what happens. The cigarette appears to go into the left hand but it really comes out between two of the fingers. Then, when the left hand is turned round (under cover of the right) the right hand is able to get possession of the cigarette ; it is gripped between the base of the thumb and the palm. Fig. 4 shows the position, but of course the end of the cigarette does not protrude when the trick is shown ; the sketch was made in order that the reader might see at a glance exactly what happens.

Since no two hands are exactly alike, it may be that the reader will find it more convenient to let the cigarette come out between his second and third fingers ; the exact place is immaterial. Let the reader make the trick easy for himself.

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MANIPULATIONS WITH A CIGARETTE. THE TRANSFER.

CIGAR AND CIGARETTES

THE PRODUCTION OF FIVE LIGHTED CIGARETTES

The problem of how to produce five lighted cigarettes, one at a time, in a perfectly natural way, each cigarette being held between the first and second fingers of the right hand, becomes easy when one looks at the accompanying illustration, but one or two hints will be useful.

The necessary fake must be nicely made, the spring at the base being just strong enough to hold the cigarettes in position. If the spring is a shade too strong the magician will find a difficulty in getting the cigarettes away quickly.

The illustration shows where the fake is placed on the right hip. The magician can begin the trick by wiping his hands with a handkerchief. He then drops the handkerchief—apparently accidentally. In stooping down to pick up the handkerchief with his left hand the performer gets his right hand in place for the production; with the thumb on one side of all five cigarettes and the fingers on the other he lifts all five out of the fake with one movement. He then turns slightly to his left, so that the back of his right hand is towards the audience. Fig. A shows the position of the hand, and Figs. B and C show how the cigarettes are produced one at a time.

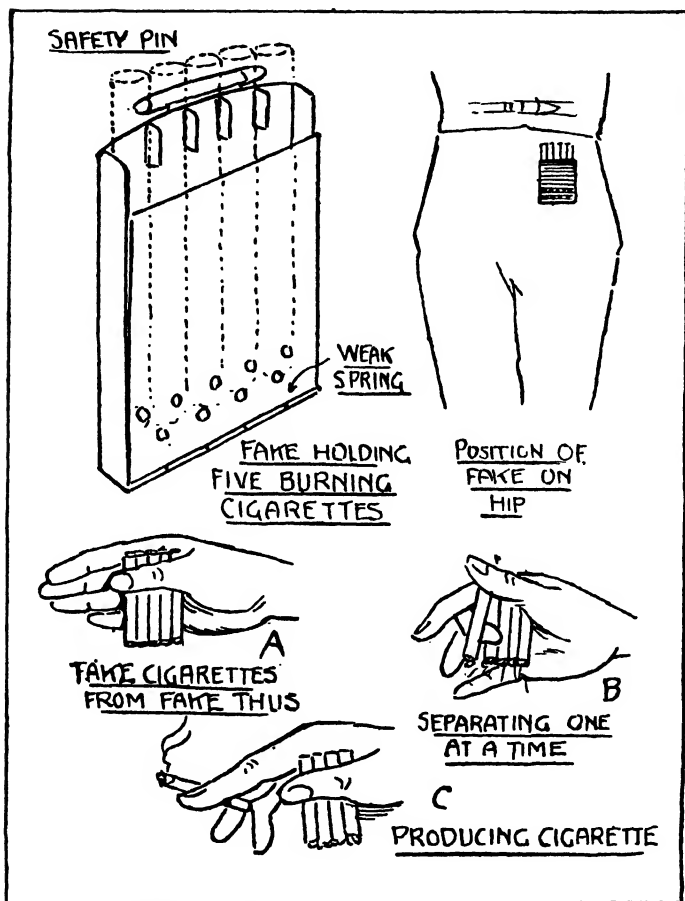
Some ordinary Virginia cigarettes should be used; Turkish cigarettes burn too quickly. As each cigarette is produced it is taken from the right hand with the left and placed on an ash-tray.

A CIGARETTE PRODUCER

This little piece of apparatus is similar in design to the coin-holder attached under the lower edge of the waistcoat; a little pressure from the front releases a coin into the hand held at the bottom of the waistcoat to receive it.

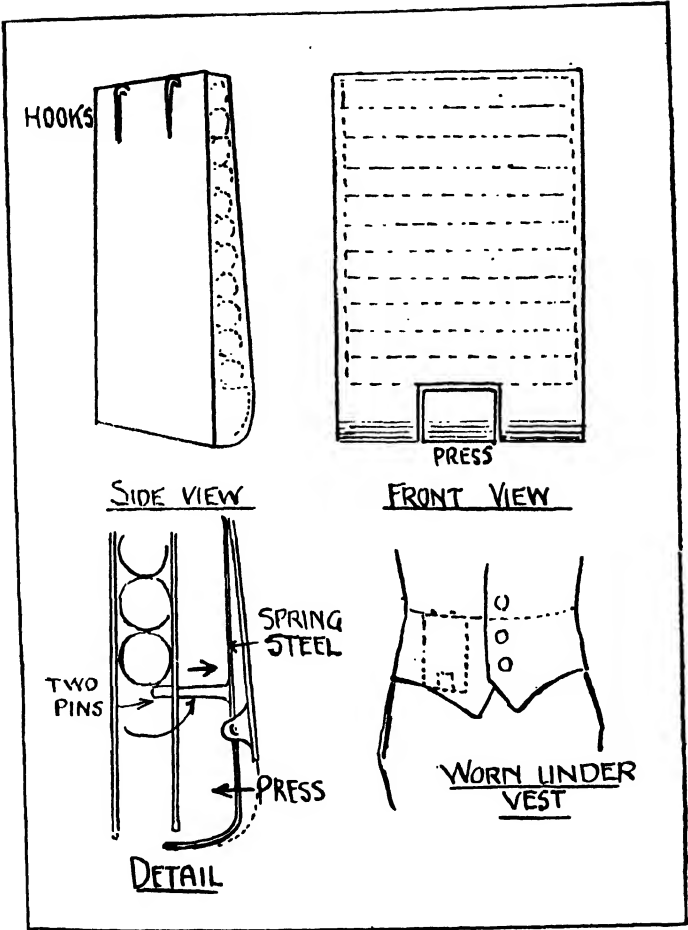
It will be seen that this cigarette producer works in the same way. The fake is hooked on under the waistcoat and when the hand presses on the lower edge of it a cigarette is released from the fake and drops into the hand; of

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THE PRODUCTION OF FIVE LIGHTED CIGARETTES.

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A CIGARETTE PRODUCER.

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course it is not produced immediately. The fake will hold eleven cigarettes.

JAMES WAKEFIELD'S CIGAR ROUTINE

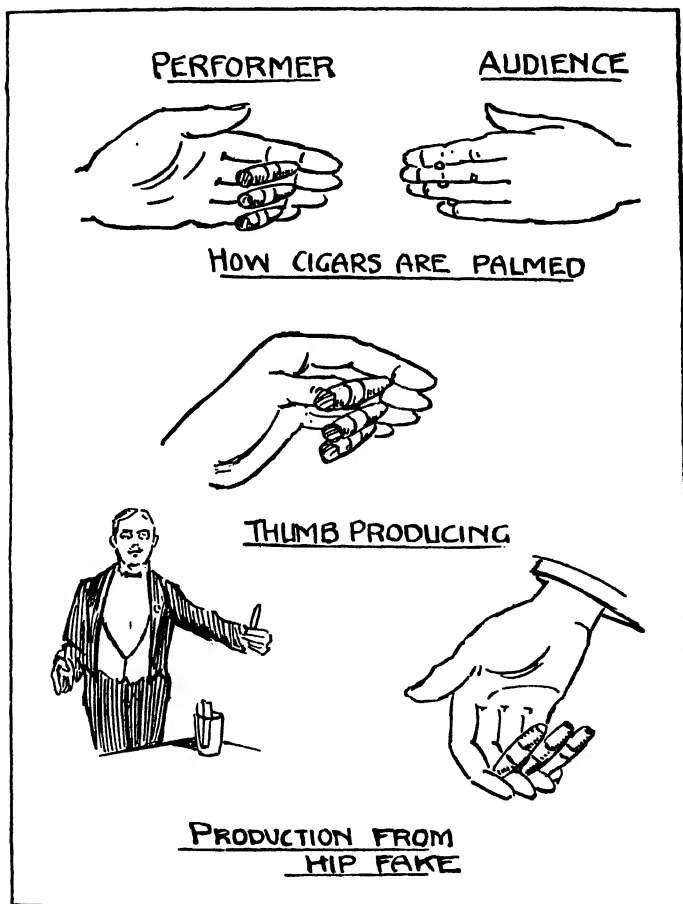
I am indebted to Mr. James Wakefield of Derby for the details of his series of tricks with cigars.

All magicians present tricks with coins, cards, and handkerchiefs and, to audiences, there is a great likeness between the tricks of one magician and the tricks of another although both magicians may know quite well that their tricks are entirely different. When audiences see a magician starting to do a trick with articles which they have not seen any other magician use in a performance they "sit up and listen"; they know that they are going to see tricks which they have never seen before, and so the magician is able to hold his audience right from the start of the performance. For this reason I am sure that this cigar routine will be welcomed by all my readers. In studying the various effects and their production they will be having a lesson from the inventor, who, as everyone knows, is also a brilliant performer. Mr. Wakefield has given the game entirely away for the benefit of his brother magicians, who, I am sure, will be very grateful to him, especially those who perform frequently at smoking concerts, after dinners, etc., etc.

The performer comes on and, while pattering to the audience, allows them to see that he has nothing in his hands. The performer calls attention to his left hand. He slaps the back of his hand and then produces a cigar with it. The right hand takes the cigar for a moment and shows it to the audience and then replaces it in the left hand. The cigar vanishes. Once more the performer slaps his left hand and the cigar reappears.

Holding the cigar upright by the tips of the fingers of the left hand, the performer strokes it with his right hand and the cigar is joined by a second cigar. One of these is placed between the fingers of the left hand; the hand is waved in the air for a second and a third cigar appears.

CIGAR AND CIGARETTES



JAMES WAKEFIELD'S CIGAR ROUTINE.

G R E A T T R I C K S R E V E A L E D

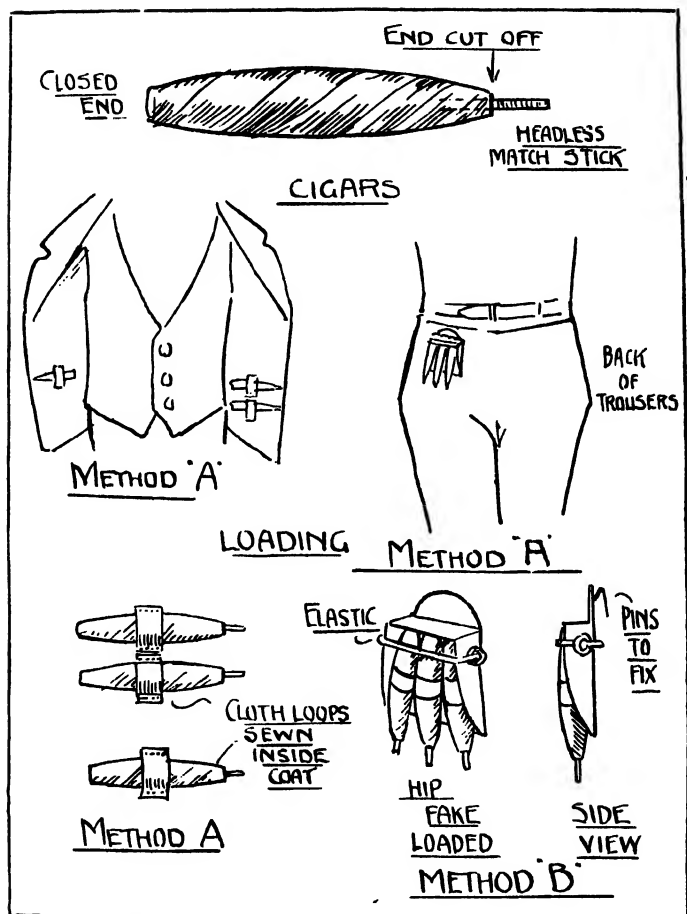
The three cigars are held between the fingers of the right hand. The closed left hand is held out and produces three more cigars, one after the other, from the air.

This is the first effect and, if the inventor had nothing more to add (except the explanations of the working), he would have conferred a great benefit on my readers. There is more to come, but let us first see how this effect—the production of six cigars from the air—is worked.

First of all—the cigars themselves. We all know—from experience!—that there are cigars and things which look like cigars! Half the effect of a trick such as I have described is lost if the cigars are not the real thing. But then comes the question. How are you going to manipulate ordinary cigars easily, and how are you going to prevent them from cracking and breaking after many rehearsals and performances? This is where the inventor comes in.

He uses ordinary cigars, but they are specially prepared. The exact length and circumference of the cigars must depend entirely on the size of the performer's hand. At one point in the trick he has to conceal three cigars in one hand. The most important part of the cigar to the magician who is going to do these tricks is the point, and so the point of each cigar is faked slightly. Choose a cigar with a pointed end and then cut a little piece off the point; the end of the cigar should be as thick as a match-stick. Cut an inch and a quarter from a match, coat one end with Seccotine and insert it in the point of the cigar, leaving about five-eighths of an inch protruding from the end of the cigar. Then cut a strip of newspaper a good inch wide and paste it round the cigar, taking care to see that the thick end of the cigar is well covered and that every spot of the paper sticks closely. Paint the cigar to match the interior and put on a band. The cigar will then be ready for the performer. Cigars prepared in this fashion will stand all the hard work they will receive from the performer for years, and, what is more, they will pass as ordinary cigars at close quarters. Six cigars of this kind are required for the effect.

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JAMES WAKEFIELD'S CIGAR ROUTINE.

G R E A T T R I C K S R E V E A L E D

The performer's coat—either an evening tail-coat or a dinner jacket—now requires a little attention. On the right-hand side, at about the middle, is sewn a loop of black velvet with the velvet side inside. The exact place for this loop will depend to a certain extent on the length of the performer's body and the length of his arm. The loop must hold a cigar securely, but it must not be too tight ; the performer needs to be able to slip the cigar out of the loop easily. The point of the cigar should come nearly to the edge of the coat.

Two more loops of the same kind are sewn separately on the left-hand side of the coat and there should be a space of an inch between them.

We now require a little fake to hold three cigars. A miniature dust-pan, procurable at a toy-shop, will answer the purpose. Two small eyes of wire are fastened to the sides of the fake at the large end and a piece of strong cord elastic is fastened to the wire loops and is passed over the front of the fake. At the back of the fake two large bent pins are attached so that the fake can be placed in the right position on the left hip.

And now for the working of the trick. After the performer has delivered his introductory patter and allowed the audience to see that his hands are empty, he stands with his right side to the audience.

Holding out the left hand the performer calls the attention of the audience to it and the right hand secretly gets possession of the first cigar, which is gripped by the point between the first and second fingers and is thus drawn out of the loop.

The fingers of the right hand are passed over the front of the left hand to the wrist and then back again to the tips of the fingers. During this move the thumb of the left hand goes round the cigar and thus brings it into the left hand. The tips of the first and second fingers of the left hand at once grip the point of the cigar.

The left hand is then turned over with the back to the audience and the tips of the fingers of the right hand are passed over it. The right hand slaps the back of the left

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hand and the cigar is produced. The right hand takes the cigar from the left by the point.

The performer is now going to cause the cigar to vanish mysteriously. He holds it by the tips of the fingers of his right hand and places the thick end of the cigar on the palm of the left hand. That is what the audience see. In reality the performer grips the point of the cigar between the tips of the first and second fingers of his right hand, and as the left hand is closed—apparently over the cigar—the transfer is made. The cigar swings back into the right hand.

The right hand could produce it at that point, but this would not be good showmanship. The performer is now in the same position as he was at the beginning of the trick, and he goes through all the movements already explained for the production of the cigar from the left hand. The right hand takes the cigar for a moment.

The performer, now facing the audience, suggests that if, when he has only one cigar in his case, he meets a friend, he always "does this" with his cigar. While pattering the performer gets one of the cigars out of the loop on the left-hand side of his coat; the cigar is held by the point between the tips of the first and second fingers and the hand hides it. The cigar in the right hand is placed between the first and second fingers of the left hand. When the performer says, "I do this," he passes his right hand over the cigar which the audience can see; the fingers really go behind the cigar and the thumb lifts the hidden cigar up.

"Then," says the performer, "I have two cigars, one for myself and one for my friend. Of course, if a second friend comes along it is an easy matter to get another cigar; I do the same thing over again."

While he is talking the performer is getting the second cigar from the left side of his coat. He continues:

"I just put one cigar into my hand, wave the other hand at it, and there is another cigar."

This time the right hand takes no part in the production; the left thumb swings the cigar up into view. The

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three cigars are then taken between the tips of the right hand, and the performer turns slightly to the left and then round to the right. When he turns to the left the performer gets all three cigars out of the fake on the left hip; they are held between the first joints of the fingers. Then the performer turns slightly to the right and continues his patter.

"Of course, if another friend comes along—and when once you know this trick you'll find you have plenty of friends—you reach out into the air and get another cigar. (Here the thumb of the left hand bends under one of the cigars and raises it into view.) Another friend and—another cigar. One more friend and—one more cigar. (The movements for producing are the same. Each cigar is taken by the right hand as it is produced.) I could go on doing this all day, but my case doesn't hold more than six cigars."

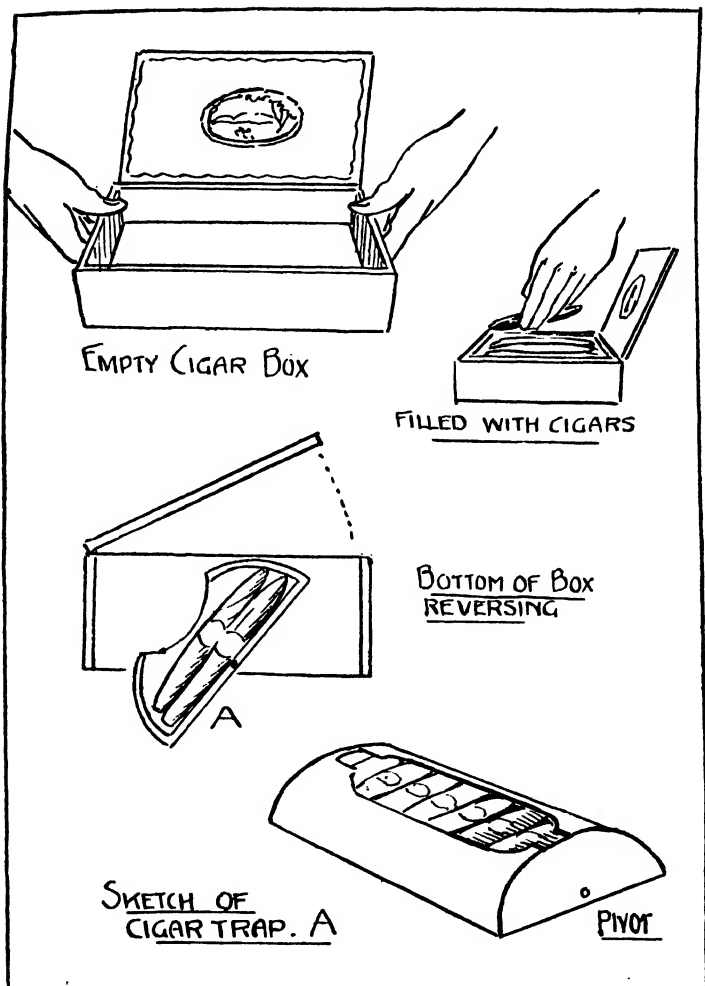
The cigars can be placed in a tumbler with a foot, so that the audience have a good view of them. The performer then goes on to his next trick, in which he shows a cigar-box.

"I don't really know how this trick is done. A friend sent this to me the other day, and when I opened the parcel and saw the box I said to myself, 'Ah, good—very good—a box of cigars,' but when I opened the box I thought it wasn't so good after all, for it was a box *for* cigars—not a box *of* cigars, for you can see that it is empty. It seemed a rather poor trick to play on a cigar smoker, and I was just wondering what I should do with the box, when it occurred to me to open the box again and I found that I had overlooked something inside—a little note from my friend. He says, 'Knowing how fond you are of tricks with cigars, I thought I'd send you one,' and it really isn't a bad trick—as you can see for yourselves."

Here the performer shows the box nearly full of cigars. He pours them out on to a tray and—if the fee permits—gives some away to the audience.

The trick is in the box, the bottom of which is made to revolve on two pins, one at each end. Two more pins are

CIGAR AND CIGARETTES



JAMES WAKEFIELD'S CIGAR ROUTINE.

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fixed at the ends, near the side, to stop the back from making more than a half-revolution. A saw-cut in the ends allows the bottom to pass the pins when it is necessary to do so while the bottom is revolved.

One side of the bottom of the box is plain ; on the other side is fixed a fake to hold the cigars.

To make the fake glue two half-circles of wood at the ends. A piece of cardboard is fastened on each side of the half-circles of wood, with an opening about two inches wide at the top. After the box is filled with cigars an envelope with a card inside is pushed under the top of the two pieces of cardboard to keep the cigars from falling out when the fake on the bottom of the box is " outside ".

To present the trick pick up the box with the fingers on the lid and the thumb underneath the box ; this prevents the bottom of the box from moving.

When the inside of the box is to be shown to the audience stand with your right side to the audience and put the box, in an upright position, on the fingers of the left hand. The left thumb revolves the bottom of the box and the right hand opens the lid, and the box is shown empty. Close the lid with the right hand, the right thumb starts the turning of the bottom of the box ; the left thumb finishes the job. Then the box is taken in the right hand, as at first, with the thumb underneath, and the box is placed on the left hand, the bottom of the box being on the palm. Take out the envelope, read out the message, and pour the cigars out on to a tray.

The box should be made of dry mahogany, well seasoned ; if the wood is not suitable the working will not always be silent !

SLEIGHTS WITH CIGARS

Vanish and Recovery

The performer stands with his right side to the audience. He holds a cigar between the first and second fingers of his right hand. The left hand is nearly closed, with the thumb pointing towards the floor.

CIGAR AND CIGARETTES

The cigar is pushed into the left hand, the larger end going in between the thumb and first finger. When the cigar is out of sight the left thumb pushes it along the palm of the right hand. The left hand is turned with the back to the audience. The tips of the right hand are passed over the back of the left hand, and the fingers of the left hand are then moved as though the performer intended to crumple up the cigar. The left hand is shown empty and the right hand produces the cigar from the back of the left hand. A description of these movements may seem complicated, but in practice they all blend into one movement.

Another Vanish and Recovery

The performer, facing the audience, appears to swallow a cigar which is afterwards produced from the throat.

The thick end of the cigar is put into the mouth and held there for a second. The tips of the first and second fingers of the right hand grip the point of the cigar and apparently push it into the mouth, but the thick end of the cigar is really pushed down against the chin until the tips of the fingers reach the bottom of the chin.

At this point the performer appears to swallow the cigar, the thick end of which is now on the Adam's Apple of the throat. The right thumb quickly goes under the cigar and raises it into an upright position; the cigar appears to come from the throat.

Using the same moves the performer can appear to push the cigar into his left ear; he produces it from his right ear.

To Make 1 Cigar into 2 Cigars

A little impromptu effect, when one is wearing a coat that has not the loops sewn to it. Prepare for the trick by putting two cigars, points outwards, between the buttons of the waistcoat. Then the first moves of the cigar production can be worked.

G R E A T T R I C K S R E V E A L E D

Another Method

Magicians who like "something to do" will like this method. If it is well done it is very good indeed. Here are the directions.

Have a cigar in left trousers pocket, with the point sticking out. Stand with the right side to the audience and show a cigar in the right hand. Apparently throw the cigar into the air, but really grip it by the point between the tips of the first and second fingers; the hand hides the cigar. The hand lunges forward and produces the cigar from the air; the cigar is really pushed up by the right thumb.

During this move secretly get the cigar from the left pocket and face the audience. The cigar in the right hand is drawn along the fingers of the left hand two or three times. At the last time the fingers of the left hand take the cigar openly from the right hand and at the same time the right hand steals the cigar hidden in the left hand and holds it behind the cigar seen by the audience, who should be convinced that there is only one cigar before them. Then the two hands are separated and the audience see the two cigars. It is a beautiful move, but, to use the familiar phrase, "it wants a little doing"; still, the effect is so good that it is well worth the trouble that one takes in practising it.

The Vertical Vanish and Recovery

The performer, standing with his face to the audience, holds a cigar upright in his right hand; the cigar is between two fingers. The left hand closes round the cigar and appears to take it, but it really pushes the cigar down into the palm of the right hand. The left hand is moved away, as though the cigar were inside it, and is then opened slowly. The right hand produces the cigar from the back of the right knee.

Cigar to Cigarettes

In this case the cigar is a real dummy, being made of thin tin or papier mâché painted brown; it must have a

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spiked point similar to the points of the other cigars, and it must be large enough to hold three cigarettes.

Show a piece of notepaper slightly longer than the cigar ; roll the cigar in the paper and twist up one end. In going to the other end let the cigar slip out slightly so that the point can be secretly gripped between the first and second fingers of the right hand. Draw the cigar out, hiding it behind the right hand ; the cigarettes naturally fall out into the paper tube. Twist up the end of the tube and hold it up with the left hand for a moment and look at it. The audience will follow your example, and so you will have a good chance to drop the cigar into your *profonde* or the side-pocket of your dinner-jacket. Make a few passes over the paper tube and then unroll the paper, show the cigarettes, and hand them to the audience.

Note.—The sleights should be well practised so that they can be performed smoothly, and it is a good plan to rehearse before a mirror and then away from the mirror. When presenting the sleights to the audience they should not be performed too quickly ; if the performer makes this mistake people will not understand what he is doing and practically all the effects will be lost. There is all the difference in the world between a smooth performance and a hurried one.

CHAPTER V

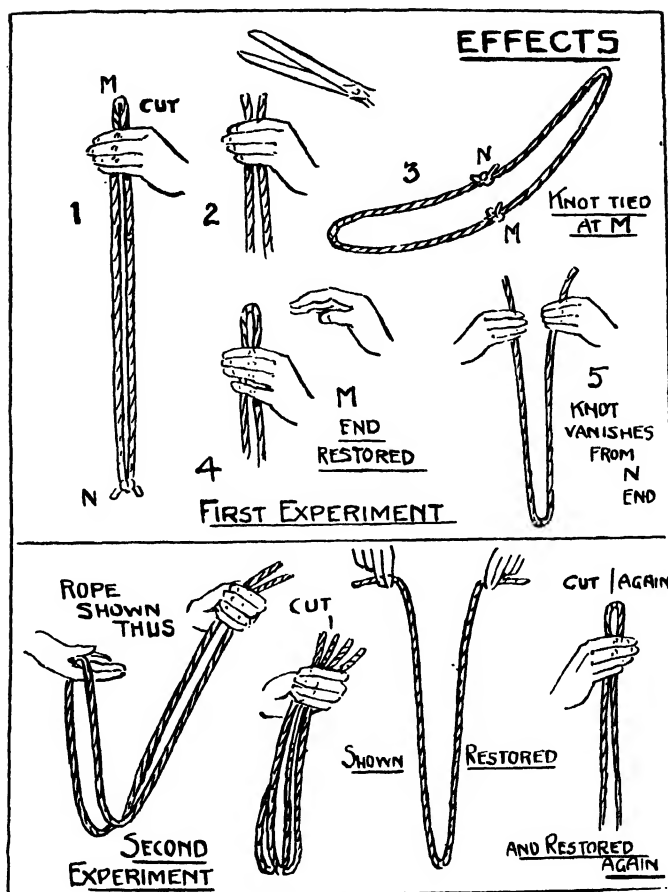
ROPE

A ROPE ROUTINE

EDWARD PROUDLOCK, to whom I am very grateful for permission to describe his rope routine here, is a very popular member of the Magicians' Club, and is always willing to give a turn at any of the Club's entertainments. Long before rope tricks were as fashionable as they are now Mr. Proudlock had studied them and had made a special feature of them in his performances. Unlike many performers, Mr. Proudlock does not claim that all the methods he uses are his own invention, but what he does claim is that he has spent a very great deal of time in studying all the different methods of bringing about various effects with ropes and that his choice of the effects which he presents is the outcome of much thought and many experiments. From experience he knows which effects appear to be the most mystifying to an ordinary audience, and these he is never tired of polishing and improving. He never leaves a trick until it is as nearly perfect as he can make it, and, as will be seen in this section, he uses various methods known to magicians in his own original way.

Magicians who are thinking of including a rope routine in their performances are reminded that many tricks of this kind can now be obtained from all dealers in magical goods. It may interest magicians to know that Mr. Proudlock often concludes his rope routine by a masterly performance of Ned Williams' well-known trick with a rope and a ring—a gem of its kind.

A ROPE ROUTINE



A ROPE ROUTINE.

G R E A T T R I C K S R E V E A L E D

EDWARD PROUDLOCK'S CUT ROPE ROUTINE

I direct the reader's attention, first of all, to the illustration headed "Effects". It will be seen that there are two distinct experiments with two tricks in each experiment.

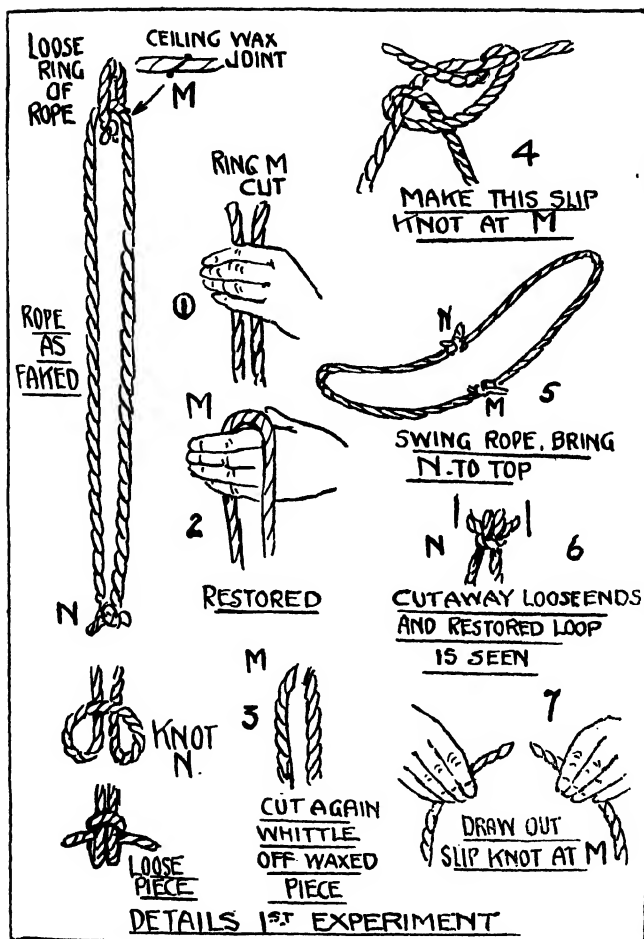
If the reader will keep an eye on the illustrations of the first experiment he will see that the performer begins by holding a large piece of rope with the two ends tied together at "N". (Remember, please, I am now giving you the effect as it is seen by the audience.) The rope is thus made into a loop and the performer, holding the loop marked "M" in the illustration, cuts through it, and the audience see the two ends of the rope. The two ends are magically joined together. The performer says that he will repeat the trick and he cuts the loop at "M" again and ties them together for a moment. He then shows the two pieces of rope tied together with two knots. He causes one of the knots to disappear and then unties the other, showing one long piece of rope.

Now, if the reader will turn to the illustration of "Details of 1st Experiment" he should have no difficulty in seeing how those two tricks are done.

The piece of rope is really a loop of rope with the two ends joined together with sealing wax. Linked into the loop is a small loose ring of rope.

In order to give the audience the impression that the rope is an ordinary loop with the two ends together the performer uses a simple, but very ingenious, device. If the reader will look at the point marked "N" in the "Rope as Faked" he will notice that two ends are shown, and if he will look at the two small sketches below he will see how that little effect is produced. The loop at "N" is folded back for about half an inch and then a tiny piece of rope is inserted in the loop and is held there. Only a genius would have thought of that neat way of convincing the audience that, at the point "N", there are two of the ends of the loop which the performer is holding in his hand.

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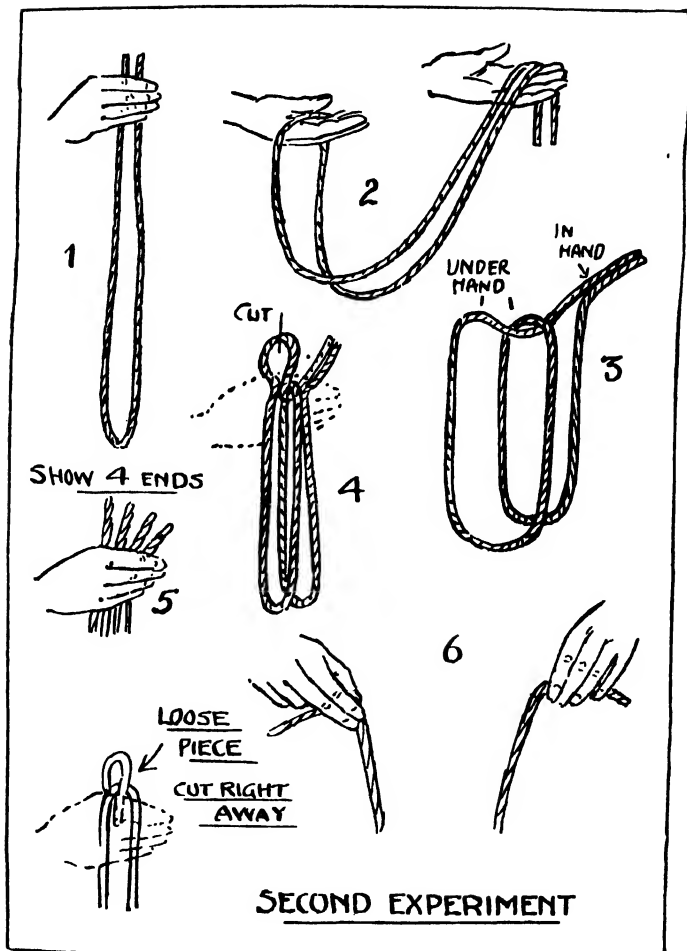
So much for the faking of the rope—a very simple matter. The working of the trick will now be clear. Naturally, the performer hides the junction of the loose ring of rope and the big loop. The audience see the top of the loose ring and think that they are looking at the top of the big loop. The performer cuts through that, shaves down the ends, “to get them quite level”, as he explains (any other excuse for cutting will do). Finally, there is only a little piece of the loose ring left in the hand, and in passing his right hand over this the performer can allow it to drop among the other little pieces. If he prefers to do so he can cut through the loose ring once and palm it away. In either case it is an easy matter to show the rope restored. (See Fig. 2. “M” Restored.)

The performer suggests that perhaps the audience did not see how he did that, so he will do it again, and he cuts right through the loop at the point “M”. (See Fig. 3.) In doing this he is able to whittle off the waxed piece of rope.

The rope is now in one piece, although the audience see four ends, two in the performer’s hand and two at the point “N”, and therefore believe that the rope is in two pieces. If the performer wished to do so he could easily bring the trick to a conclusion by “restoring” the rope at the point “N”, for he would simply have to cut away the loose piece, rub the “knot” between his hands and the trick would be done. But the inventor has improved on that finish by making this part of the trick very strong.

He ties the two ends together in the way shown at Fig. 4. I advise the reader to study that diagram carefully, for there is a good reason for tying that particular knot. When it is tied it is exactly like the faked knot at “N”, and so the performer can openly show the loop formed, apparently, of two pieces of rope, knotted together. (See Fig. 5.) The performer swings the loop between his hand and, to the audience, manipulates the knot he has just tied, but he really deals with the faked knot at “N”. By cutting away the ends of the loose piece (see Fig. 6) the performer is easily able to show the two “ends”

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joined together. Then all he has to do is to untie the slip knot he tied after he had cut the rope and he can show the rope in one piece and can at once throw it out for examination. There is nothing to conceal, and there is no clue of any kind to the double mystery.

I strongly advise the reader to study this trick carefully, for it is certainly one of the big "plums" of the book. I know of no better cut and restored rope trick, and I can say, without conceit, that I know all of them!

The second experiment is performed with a longer piece of rope, and I direct the reader to the illustration headed "Effects"; there he will see the effect of the experiment as the audience see it. The long piece of rope is doubled and the performer cuts through the loop and shows four ends. Immediately he holds out the rope by the two ends and shows that it has been restored. Then he cuts it again and again restores it and hands the rope to the audience for examination.

If the reader will now turn to the illustration, "Second Experiment", he should have no difficulty in arriving at the working of both effects. Note first Figs. 1 and 2. The two hands are brought together and the rope is then in the position shown in Fig. 3. The performer then makes a loop of one end and cuts through it, showing all four ends as in Fig. 5. The performer thus has a little piece of rope concealed in his hand, and he is able to show the rope restored. Using the extra little piece as a loop he cuts it entirely away and is thus able to show the rope restored again, and once more he has nothing concealed in his hands at the finish of the two experiments.

A very brilliant rope routine, on which the inventor is to be heartily congratulated; I am deeply indebted to him for permission to explain the working of the routine here.

CHAPTER VI

BILLIARD BALLS

A BILLIARD BALL ROUTINE

I HAVE much pleasure in expressing my thanks to Mr. Albert Warby, a popular member of the Magicians' Club, for kindly permitting me to include an explanation of his routine with billiard balls in this book. My only regret is that I cannot have the illustrations to this section reproduced in colours; if that were possible I am sure that readers would understand at once how very attractive an entertainment this series of colour changes and manipulations is in the hands of Mr. Warby. Since coloured illustrations are ruled out on account of the enormous expense, I can only ask my readers to take my word for it that these effects are tremendously attractive and fascinating to an audience.

A few years ago any magician who specialized in billiard ball tricks would have been one of a crowd, but times have changed. To-day there is always a good welcome for any magician who can present a good series of tricks with billiard balls, and such tricks have one big point in their favour. The effects are so plain that they can be understood and appreciated by any audience, even by an audience of little children; yet they can be relied upon to amuse an audience of adults. Another point in their favour is that these tricks can be presented at very close quarters, and at any performance under those conditions the magician gets credit for clever work.

Perhaps there would be more specialists with billiard balls if the tricks were easy to perform. I do not pretend that they are easy, for I know that they are not. I

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suggest, however, that although all magicians cannot specialize in billiard ball tricks, every magician should make a point of learning some of the best tricks of this kind, if only for his own private entertainment. It is a mistake to ignore all the tricks that one does not want to perform to audiences. One can gain a good deal from learning tricks for one's own use, and the task of learning them will be of benefit both to the mind and to the hands.

I may add that all these tricks, when presented by Mr. Warby, form a series of perfect little mysteries, and I strongly advise all my readers to try to add at least some of them to their programmes.

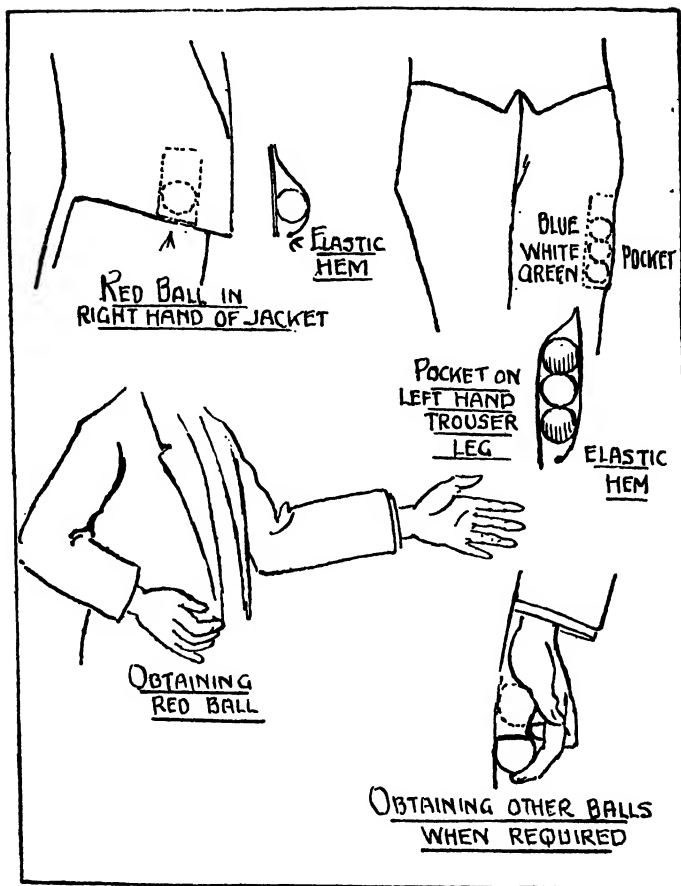
ALBERT WARBY'S BILLIARD BALLS ROUTINE

I hope that no reader will attempt to follow the directions for carrying out this brilliant routine with billiard balls without having first provided himself with four balls. The author kindly posed for all the sketches which are here reproduced and I am greatly indebted to him for all the trouble he took to ensure accuracy.

Briefly, the series of manipulations leads up to the magical production of four billiard balls of different colours, and when I add that the production is accomplished without any shell and without any trick balls, my readers will appreciate the value of this routine. It will interest readers to know that Mr. Warby uses large balls made of ivory ; in his hands all the effects are dazzling and bewildering ; indeed, I imagine that most people, having seen the routine once, would like to have it repeated immediately. Even experienced magicians, who may think that they know all there is to know about manipulations with billiard balls, will find that they can get some very useful hints from studying the various moves. As to the magicians who are still in the novice stage of magic, I am sure they will be enthusiastic over this splendid lesson in magic.

The illustrations show how the four balls are placed

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ALBERT WARBY'S BILLIARD BALLS ROUTINE.

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at the beginning of the series, the red ball being in a small pocket on the right of the coat and the other three balls being in a pocket on the left-hand leg of the trousers. The mouths of both pockets are closed with an elastic hem, but each ball can easily be obtained when it is required by merely pressing on the outside of the pocket ; the ball is squeezed through the elastic opening and so into the hand.

The reader should note the order in which the balls are placed in the left pocket ; otherwise he will find himself confused long before he has reached the end of the routine.

At the outset the performer makes a half turn to the left and shows that his left hand is empty ; at the same time he gets the red ball into the right hand. From this point the instructions are :—

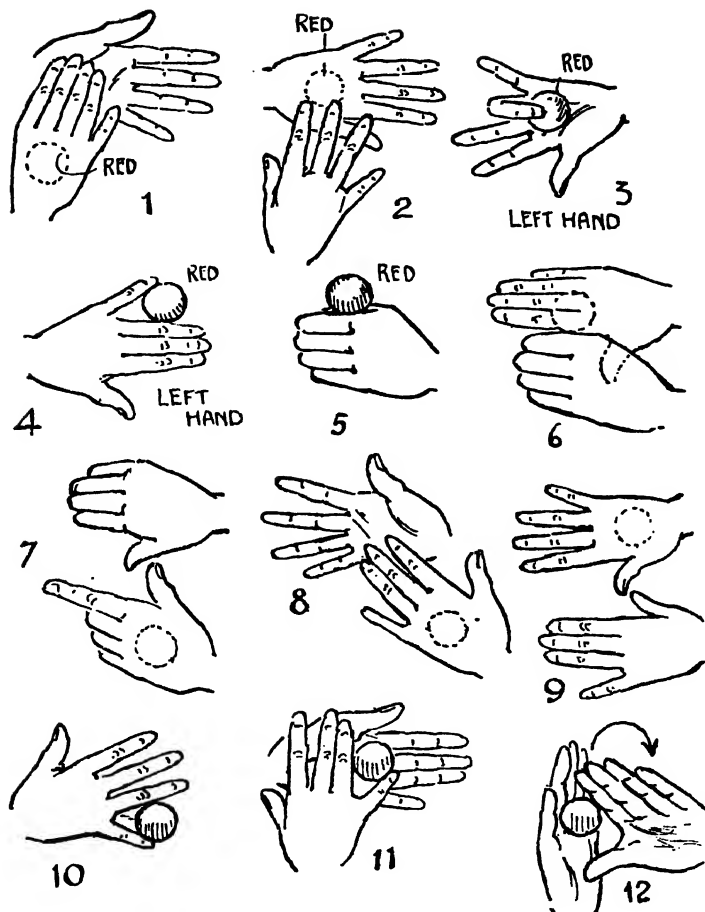
Bring the right hand, with the red ball palmed, up to the left (Fig. 1). With a sweeping movement of the right hand over the left palm leave the ball in the left palm and at the same moment turn the left hand over with its back to the audience (Fig. 2). If this move is made correctly the audience will not know that the ball is in the left hand. Make a few passes with the right hand over the left and then produce the red ball between the third and little fingers of the left hand, as in Figs. 3 and 4.

Turn slightly from the left to the right and put the ball on the closed left hand, as in Fig. 5. Apparently take the ball away with the right hand (Fig. 6), but let it sink into the left hand and palm it there. The right hand apparently holds the ball. Make a few movements with the fingers and appear to squeeze it away (Fig. 7). Show the right hand empty (Fig. 8). Pass the left hand over the right and then turn the right with its back to the audience, the ball being palmed in it (Fig. 9).

Turn the body to the left, bring the right hand down and up and produce the ball between the third and fourth fingers (Fig. 10).

Show the left hand empty, and place the ball in the

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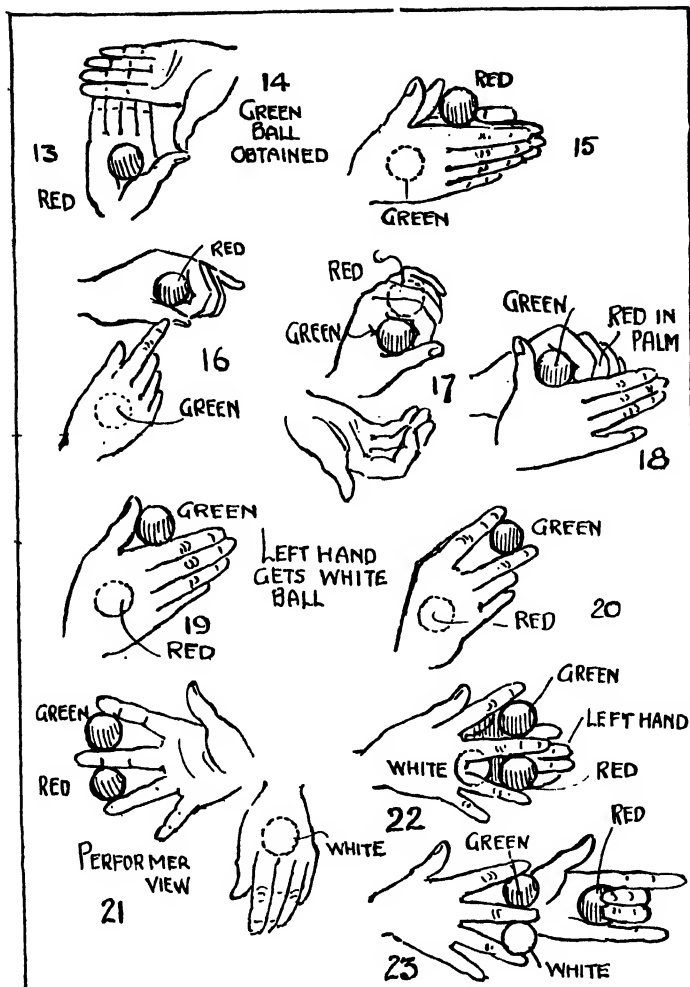


ALL WITH RED BALL

ROLL BALL
OVER BACK
LEFT HAND

ALBERT WARBY'S BILLIARD BALLS ROUTINE.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



ALBERT WARBY'S BILLIARD BALLS ROUTINE.

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left palm as in Fig. 11. Roll the ball with the right hand, with a circular motion, and apparently leave it in the left hand, which appears to squeeze it away. A side view of the movement is shown in Fig. 12, and the performer's view of the completed movement, showing the ball palmed in the right hand, is shown in Fig. 13.

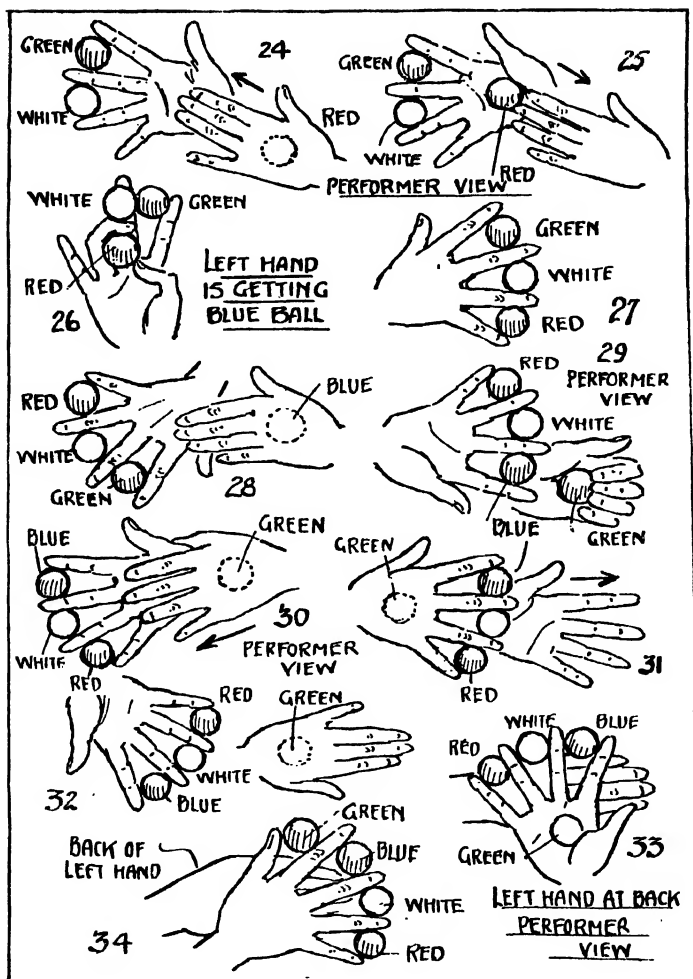
The right hand produces the ball between the third and fourth fingers and at the same time the left hand gets possession of the green ball. With a twist of the right hand transfer the ball from the fingers to the space between the thumb and first finger. Bring up left, palming green ball, and take the red ball in the left hand and leave the green ball (as yet not produced) palmed in the right hand (Fig. 15).

Close the left hand as in Fig. 16 and then rub the right hand over the left ; in doing this actually push the red ball right into the left palm and leave the green in front of it (Fig. 17). This move, when properly executed, creates the impression that the colour of the red ball has been changed to green. Place the green ball at the root of the right thumb (Fig. 18) and at the same time palm the red ball in the right hand (Fig. 19). Roll the green ball in between the first and second fingers (Fig. 20), and while getting possession of the white ball, produce the red ball again between the third and fourth fingers. In turning to the right work the red ball between the second and third fingers (Fig. 21).

Pass the left hand over the right and exchange the white ball for the red. Then pass left hand over palm of the right and leave the red ball palmed in the right hand ; at the same time reverse the right hand, showing the back. Give a little tug to the right sleeve and then turn slightly to left. The performer's view of these moves is given in Figs. 22 and 23 and the completion in Fig. 24 and Fig. 25.

Produce the red ball between the third and fourth fingers by the movement shown in Fig. 26 ; at the same time get possession of the blue ball with the left hand. The right hand is now as in Fig. 27.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



ALBERT WARBY'S BILLIARD BALLS ROUTINE.

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Turn to the right and turn right hand with its back to the audience (Fig. 28). Pass the left hand across the right and change the green ball for the blue ball. The right hand now reads red, white, blue (Fig. 29). Turn palm of right hand to audience and place the fingers of the left hand near the roots of fingers of right hand (Fig. 30); then perform the change-over. It will be found necessary to effect this by keeping the left hand perfectly motionless until the turn has been made, when the left hand continues the swing and leaves the green ball palmed, as in Fig. 31.

The left hand is now shown empty; the right hand is passed across it and at the same time the left hand is reversed with the green ball palmed in it (Fig. 32).

Let the audience see that the right hand holds only three balls and then, with a motion suggesting that there is nothing in the left hand, pass right hand across the front of it and then the back of it, regaining possession of the green ball as in Fig. 33, which gives the performer's view.

Hold out the left hand with its back to the audience, bring the right hand over it and leave the green ball back palmed between the first and fourth fingers; with the same movement take the green ball between the thumb and first finger of the right hand (Fig. 34). Throw the balls into the air one at a time to show that they are solid.

The performer should be very careful at all times not to hide his hands with his body; this fault is caused by turning round too far. The audience are not interested in the performer's back! They want to see his hands all the time.

BERTRAM'S BILLIARD BALL TRICK

The apparatus for this trick consists of one solid ball enclosed in two "shells" of a billiard ball. These shells fit closely together, and in that condition appear to be an ordinary billiard ball.

At the outset of the trick the conjurer has the solid

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ball tucked under his waistcoat on the right side ; the hollow ball is placed in a similar position on the other side. The conjurer goes down to the audience, pauses before someone with a handkerchief or a newspaper on his (or her) lap, and says, " Excuse me, I think you have something under there which may be useful for the next trick." The conjurer extends his right hand as though to pick up something, and then points with his left hand. As his left hand advances his right hand is drawn back to the waistcoat and squeezes out the ball. This is palmed and then produced from the person's lap, or, in the case of a man, from the inner pocket of his coat—or from some other convenient place.

The conjurer makes various passes with this ball—throwing it up into the air and vanishing it, making it pass through the leg, turning it round between the two first fingers, etc. etc. Finally he taps it on the table to show that it is a solid ball. To do this he has to turn slightly to the left and this movement covers the act of squeezing out the two " shells " from the waistcoat ; they remain concealed in the left hand for a moment. The conjurer then puts the solid ball in the left hand and makes an awkward movement as though he was trying to " vanish " the ball. What he really does is to open the two shells and slip the ball inside. He shows that the ball is " still there ". Holding the ball in his right hand, the conjurer then passes his left over it and lifts off one of the shells and holds it in his left hand by passing his thumb and first finger round the edge ; at the same time he holds the other shell in a similar position in his right hand, but this shell has the solid ball at the back of it. The solid ball must be kept from falling out. The conjurer thus appears to have converted the one ball into two balls. He then waves his hands round in a circular movement and allows the solid ball to slip out of the shell and take up a position at the tips of the fingers of the right hand between the two shells. The one ball has thus multiplied into three balls.

These movements are now made over again, but in

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reverse order, ending with the solid ball being hidden in between the two shells, and these being shown as one ball. The conjurer takes this ball in his right hand and brings his hand down quickly as though he was going to throw the ball into the air. When the hand is close to the edge of the *profonde* it drops the ball into that pocket. The hand is brought up quickly as though it still contained the ball and makes a throwing motion. The audience then see the empty hand ; the ball has apparently vanished into thin air.

PATTER

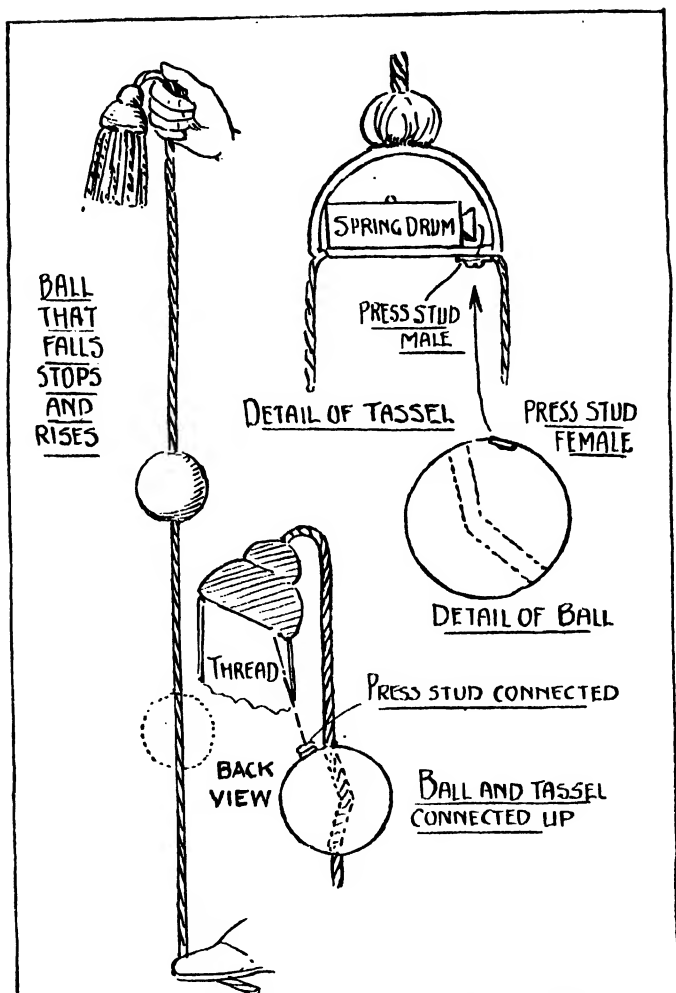
For my next trick I want to borrow something. Excuse me, madam, I think you have something there—under your handkerchief—that will do very nicely for the next trick. Thank you, it was very kind of you to bring this (produce solid ball). You see, it is quite solid (rap it on table). Now, I will warm it up a little ; that makes it fluid, so that it runs about. (Makes various passes with the ball.) It is now solid again (rap on table). You may have heard that where there is one there is often another. Here is the other. That makes two ; if we do that again we get a third. If you are going to try this trick, let me warn you never to wave the hands in this direction. That makes the ball disappear ; now we have only two. One more wave, and there is now only one, and if I throw this up into the air it disappears altogether, and so we have nothing.

THE RISING AND FALLING BALL

A good old trick with a modern improvement. Everyone knows the trick of the ball threaded on to a cord. The ball naturally falls down directly it is released but stops when the performer tells it to stop because he tightens the cord. The hole is not made straight through the ball. (See illustration.)

The improvement consists in making the ball rise to

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



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the top of the cord at the end of the trick. It will be seen that there is a small spring drum with a thread in it concealed in the tassel at the top of the cord. The performer brings the ball to the top of the cord and attaches it to the thread by means of a press stud, part of the stud being in the ball and part near the drum. Then the performer pulls the ball down to the bottom of the cord. By merely pressing on the release in the drum the performer causes it to act, and the thread takes up the ball.

CHAPTER VII

SUGGESTIONS AND ADVICE

SPECIAL TABLES

THERE are two sides to every question, and I have often had both sides of this one put before me by arguments from conjurers of all grades, from the budding amateur to the most advanced expert.

The question is : Should a conjurer use a special table ?

I will first answer the question from the point of view of those who would say "No" to it.

I take it for granted that in this case the description "conjurer" refers to the drawing-room man only. I do not think there can be any doubt as to whether the music-hall performer should use special tables. A conjurer of this kind who does not use a special table is merely neglecting his opportunities and making his work more difficult than it otherwise would be.

Now for the drawing-room man. The reasons why he should *not* use a special table can be soon stated. It may be said that his whole performance should be as natural as possible, and that a special conjuring table is not a "natural" object ; it is invariably quite unlike any table to be found in a drawing-room. It is obviously one of the conjurer's "props", and is, therefore, regarded as part of his apparatus. Possibly, therefore, some of the audience may jump to the conclusion, during a trick, that the table "has something to do with it".

Another point against the use of the table is the difficulty of carrying it around, time spent in unpacking, fixing, unfixing, packing up. Obviously, the man who can walk into a room and begin his performance with

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any table that may happen to be there is going to save himself a lot of trouble. Also, he is going to cause people to think highly of his magical abilities, since the impromptu nature of the performance will not be lost on them.

Another point against the use of a special table is the great temptation it affords to laziness. A conjurer who has a trick table always in use is very apt to make the most of it with a vengeance! The consequence is that whenever there is something to be got rid of, or something to be *servanted*, in it goes into a well in the table. It is hardly possible to give an hour's performance of this kind without allowing people to see that the table is part of the apparatus of every trick.

Now let us consider what the magicians who use these tables have to say for them.

They say—in effect—this. A conjurer arrives at a house to give a performance. If he has no table he has to trouble his hostess to find one, and the chances are that the table he gets is too large or too small, or the wrong height, or it has no cloth, or, if it has a cloth, the cloth slips off at inconvenient moments.

As to the suggestion that a table looks like part of the show—well, these magicians say—there's no harm in that. The audience expect to see conjuring apparatus during a conjuring performance. Why shouldn't they see a conjuring table at the same time?

As to the difficulty of carrying a small table about and spending time in fixing it up—well, it is sheer nonsense to object to the use of a table on those grounds. If you carry a good show you are bound to have a car for your bag, and you may as well take a light table in the car, especially as the table can be taken to pieces and packed up inside the bag. The whole time spent in unpacking, fixing, etc., need not be more than a minute, and look at the trouble you save yourself. In a small drawing-room you may have awkward angles to deal with. By using a high table you at once get over those difficulties.

As to the suggestion that people are apt to connect

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the table with the secret of the tricks, or that the audience have a great fondness for a performance which is apparently impromptu—bosh ! (You will understand that I am only quoting what these conjurers say.) The average audience is not interested in the least in the means you use to bring about your effects ; all they want is to be amused, entertained, and mystified ; and if you can do that without a lot of trouble to yourself, and a table saves you trouble, you are a fool if you do not use one.

The notion that a special table makes a conjurer lazy by tempting him to use the wells of the table too often does not hold water. You might just as well say that the conjurer who has a couple of *profondes* in his coat is apt to use them every time he wants to get rid of something which the audience must not see. If a conjurer uses one method too many times during a performance you cannot blame the method—it is the conjurer that is wrong. The expert performer will vary his procedure with each trick, using his table for one trick, his pocket for another, a piece of apparatus for a third, and so on.

To sum up, I may say that my own conclusions are simply these. The drawing-room conjurer is perfectly justified in using a special table if his show is improved by such a table, but the table should be in good taste, and the more it is like a table such as might be found in the drawing-room of cultured people the better. A table with a quantity of cheap gold braid on it and a cloth bearing the performer's initials in huge letters is NOT required in a drawing-room. But a small artistic table is another matter altogether, and if I were going to set up as a drawing-room performer I should certainly use one. I see no reason why the conjurer should attempt to disguise the fact that the table he uses is a conjuring table, because I believe that the average audience is not in the least interested in the conjurer's table or his apparatus. What they *are* interested in is—the show !

SUGGESTIONS AND ADVICE

"IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED——"

I have been conjuring now for more years than I care to count, and I am convinced that the advice contained in the above title is the best advice that can be given to the young man or woman who has started to master the fascinating art of magic, and who may possibly be a little discouraged by his—or her—lack of progress.

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

Keep that in your mind, and don't lose sight of it. At the same time, remember that your renewed attempts to try, try again will not be of a great deal of use to you unless you try in the right way. Here are a few suggestions which may help you.

Learn to think for yourself. By all means read everything that is written on conjuring; get the contents of the books into your heads, talk with men who have succeeded, read the magical magazines. But, when you have done all this, don't forget that in order to profit by your knowledge you must learn to think for yourself.

Let me give you an example of what I am driving at. How many different ways do you know of getting a card which has been chosen by a member of your audience and returned to the pack, to the top or bottom of the pack? If you have studied conjuring, even for a short time, you probably know some dozens of different ways of keeping control over a certain card or several cards. Well, perhaps you cannot make up your mind which is the best method, and you go on fumbling about, first with one method and then with another, using a different one at each show you give, and then you wonder why your performance is not as clean as you would like it to be.

Stop doing that. Give each method a fair trial in your own room. There is no "best method" of keeping control over a card. Never mind what other conjurers do; forget that you have heard that the Great So-and-So "always does it this way". The best way for you is the way that suits your hands and your style. What suits one man does not necessarily suit another. Find

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out the way which suits you and then stick to it. Don't be tempted to give up that method until you are absolutely convinced that some new method is superior to yours. Don't fumble about with half a dozen different methods of doing the same thing. If you have practised properly one method will probably carry you through ; two methods will be ample.

Another point. Do not adopt a difficult method merely because it is difficult. You gain nothing by doing that. It is the effect on the audience that you have to consider. The audience do not know—or they ought not to get a chance of knowing—how it is that a card which was chosen and returned to the pack is afterwards found by you in some novel and striking manner. If you can deceive your audience in a simple manner you gain nothing by using a difficult method.

When you have found the method which suits you, stick to it. I myself seldom use more than one method of keeping control over a card. I have two other methods which I keep in reserve for use with troublesome people, but I seldom find any need for them. I believe I am correct in saying that one of the finest card conjurers in the world bases all his tricks practically on one sleight—with two variations of it.

When you have found out the method that suits you, practise hard at it. Don't be content with merely being able to do it well. Give up a certain amount of time every day to it. You will find that you will soon be able to do your tricks without thinking about what you are doing, and then you will be on the right road to success, because while you are performing you will be able to devote all your attention to the audience.

Do not attempt to perform a large number of tricks. Life isn't long enough to enable any man to do that well. Some of the finest performers in the world limit themselves to about a dozen tricks. They may know many others which are really only variations of those 12 tricks which usually constitute their repertoire, but those 12 tricks are their stock-in-trade.

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Now then, have you got 12 good tricks at your finger-ends? Twelve tricks which you can do at any time, at any place, under any conditions, without any previous practice? If you are a beginner I am certain that you will have to say "No" to that question. Well then, your course is obvious. Learn up 12 tricks.

What 12? The 12 that suit your style. Some men perform quickly—in a kind of whirlwind. Others have a more deliberate style. The thing is to be natural. Find out the tricks which suit your own style, your way of addressing an audience. Never mind what other conjurers do. Do not take up any one particular trick just because some great man has made a huge success with it. That great man probably worked at scores of tricks before he hit upon just the one that suited him. You must work in the same way, and while you are finding out your own powers you must be content to work in your own room and to work hard.

Map out your show in your own mind, and always keep to the same order of your tricks. Then you will not have to stop in the middle of a performance and wonder what trick is to come next. Never begin a performance with a new trick, and never conclude with one. No matter how hard you have rehearsed a new trick you are bound to be more or less nervous with it at the first performance, and the fact that you are not quite happy will be obvious to the audience. Let the new trick come in the centre of your show. No man ever gets the most out of a new trick at its first performance, so do not be discouraged if the first performance of a new trick is not the success you hoped it would be. It will probably be quite good after four public performances.

Attend carefully to the arrangement of your pockets and your table—if you use a trick table—at various stages of your performances. View your performance as a whole and keep a written record of all you do.

Be prepared to work hard. Practising at a sleight with cards for five minutes, and then putting it on one side while you take up something else, is not working. Don't

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play at magic. Work at a sleight which you wish to master, and do not give it up until you know it or are absolutely convinced that the sleight is one that is not suitable for your hands. Remember that no two pairs of hands are exactly alike, and a sleight which may be fairly easy for one man may be unsuitable for you.

Finally, make up your mind to know a few tricks thoroughly well rather than a lot of tricks only indifferently. If you keep that advice constantly in your mind you will find that you will never stray far from the royal road which leads to success.

USEFUL TIPS

Carry everything with you. I have heard it suggested that the conjurer who, upon arriving at a house, asks to be allowed to borrow a number of things, impresses his host with the idea that the performance is bound to be a success. Apparently the matter is argued in this way. The more things used in the tricks the better the tricks. Which, as Euclid says, is absurd. The drawing-room conjurer should aim at giving the minimum amount of trouble to those for whom he is to perform.

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Some things he may have to borrow—a small table to perform on, a screen, and, if he is wise, a chair behind the screen. Better still, annex two chairs if possible. Then you have a suitable stand for your bag, and so do not have to leave it on the floor and stoop down every time you want to go to it.

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If you wish to carry a special table with you, let it be one which will not be out of place when it is set up in a drawing-room. The simpler the hangings of the table or the cloth the better. A simple method of doing without a special table is to use a special tablecloth, with a small *servante* arranged at the back. This can be thrown over

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a borrowed table, and no one will suspect that you have been arranging matters on purpose for the performance.

Arrange your performance in such a way that you do not have to go behind your screen after each trick and remain there for a minute or two. After all, you are engaged to do tricks, not to provide intervals for talking.

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The difficulty of bringing forward several tricks at one time when you are beginning your performance is not great. If you begin with a large, showy trick and carry the apparatus for another similar trick and put it on a chair, you can safely fill in the gap between the two tricks with two or three small tricks, which can be carried in the pockets. Besides, the necessity for going to one's pockets to get the next trick may give one the needed opportunity for getting rid of some fake left in the hand at the conclusion of the previous trick.

Do not forget that the big trick which you carry on should be covered up. Otherwise, if you have children in the audience, you will find that they will be wondering what the apparatus is going to be used for, and will not give you their undivided attention during your performance of the first few tricks. If, for instance, you are taking on the die-box, it is an easy matter to throw a large silk handkerchief over it and put it down on a chair on your "stage". As the juvenile members of your audience are without any clue as to what is under the handkerchief, they will not start guessing, but will be content to wait until you are ready to satisfy their curiosity.

But do not make the mistake I once saw made by a clever amateur. He wanted to make his performance "look a lot", so he prepared his "stage" by decorating it with quantities of apparatus. Directly the children were admitted to the room they began to wonder what

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each piece of apparatus was to be used for, and they discussed the questions with much interest. As a matter of fact, the apparatus was only for show, and the amateur performer dived behind his screen after each trick, waited two or three minutes there, and then reappeared with another trick. He did not use any of the apparatus which he had displayed, and when he got to the end of his performance the audience considered themselves very much "sold".

It is not a bad plan to make up your mind that a black thread cannot be used satisfactorily in a drawing-room. There are thousands of drawing-rooms, of course, where an exception to this rule can be made, but you will frequently find yourself called upon to perform in rooms where the use of a black thread is impossible, and if you have been accustomed to using one you may find yourself in a temporary difficulty.

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Keep a careful watch over your patter. Remember that you never know who may be in your audience. Therefore, avoid all the stock jokes about Jews, Non-conformists, mothers-in-law, and politics. Children do not understand them, and adults do not want to hear them.

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If you are engaged to perform to an audience of children, inquire beforehand if they are mostly boys or girls, and arrange your tricks beforehand. Girls naturally like pretty, showy tricks, with handkerchiefs and coloured ribbons; boys prefer a trick in which something is burnt or broken, or otherwise destroyed. At the same time, you must not forget the smallest members of your audience; they are probably too young to appreciate a real trick, but they like something pretty to look at and if possible to handle.

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One frequently finds that the adult members of one's audience are as keenly interested in one's tricks as are the children. On such occasions it is always advisable to put in one or two good sleight-of-hand tricks. Moral : Never go anywhere without a pack of cards.

SOME OF THE OLDEST TRICKS

If you call to mind some of the oldest tricks in the world you will admit that, in some respects, they have not been beaten. Now, when I talk of the value of old tricks I mean the oldest effects. Some of the oldest effects are still the best and will ever remain so, but it is up to the modern conjurer to discover new and more magical methods for producing those effects—if he can.

Let us take a few examples. Where will you find a better trick for the drawing-room than the old, familiar cups and balls ? It is still, after all these thousands of years, one of the finest tricks that was ever invented. Of course it has its limitations. It is of no value for a stage ; it requires an immense amount of practice to do it well, and, even in a drawing-room, the effect is small. The conjurer who will work up that trick and succeed in finding a way of enlarging the objects, so that he can do the trick on a stage, will have a splendid novelty, but it *will still be an old trick*.

Again, take the Chinese rings. Where will you find a better trick than that ? The effect is so simple that a child can follow it. A number of solid rings become linked and unlinked, at the will of the performer. The trick was one of the best items in the programme of Chung Ling Soo and in the programme of many a lesser light.

Take a familiar piece of apparatus—the drawer-box. The rawest amateur conjurer knows the secret of the box, but the secret is none the less good on that account, because the public do not know it. The old drawer-box has served as a basis for the invention of many a trick-box and cabinet. The effect is what the conjurer has to

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consider, and the effect is still good—from an empty box a number of articles are produced. In the past few years there have been many “production boxes”, but in many respects they have been inferior to the good old drawer-box, which is safe, certain in its working, and very effective.

On more than one occasion Mr. David Devant has openly expressed his indebtedness to the old tricks. His famous wine and milk trick was based on a much older trick done with pieces of apparatus that looked like pieces of apparatus—and nothing else, and it was then a drawing-room trick. By improving the method and enlarging the trick Mr. Devant produced what I always consider to be one of the finest tricks ever invented, but the effect is old. Hence the value of an old trick.

I am convinced that there is a wide field open to any conjurer who will take the trouble to acquaint himself with the old tricks and improve on the methods of doing them—if he can. In many cases it will be very difficult, but if conjuring were as simple as learning the alphabet there would be nothing attractive in it.

There are any number of old tricks awaiting revival and improvement, and the conjurer who is thinking of taking up this fascinating work need not go back many years for his material. He will find plenty of tricks ready to hand in *Modern Magic* and *More Magic*, and he need not confine himself to stage tricks. The rope trick, recently heralded as a novelty—and in its present form it is a novelty—is nothing but our old friend the “cut string restored” in a new form. The “burnt handkerchief restored” has been revived again and again in a variety of ways, and it is still one of the best of the old tricks. Sand placed in a vessel of water and then taken out dry is a good old trick, and one which is seldom performed nowadays—presumably because most conjurers do not care to be bothered by what is really rather a messy trick for the drawing-room.

Study the old tricks and perform them. In so doing you will find yourself in possession of excellent material

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for the production of new tricks ; new, that is to say, in regard to the methods employed, but old so far as the effects are concerned.

There is still another reason why magicians should study the old tricks. In doing so they will learn the principles of magic, and by thus extending their knowledge will find out what to avoid and what to do. For example, there would be no sense in devising a large and expensive piece of apparatus for the production of two or three handkerchiefs, because simpler and more magical means have already been devised. I merely quote this as an example of what not to do. But if the conjurer could devise, say, a production which would have all the effect of the drawer-box but without the one weak point of that piece of apparatus—then, in my estimation, he would have an excellent new trick, but it would still be the old drawer-box in another form.

In any case, whether you are an inventor of tricks, or whether you are a performer, the study of the old tricks will not fail to help you on the road to the goal which no one ever quite reaches—perfection.

USEFUL CARD TIPS

The young amateur will often find that a very popular part of his experiments will be the little interludes between the tricks. For instance, suppose he wants to borrow a handkerchief for use in a trick. He takes the handkerchief and draws attention to the fact that it is impossible to tie a knot in a handkerchief of that kind. This is a very old "little trick", not worth showing as a trick in itself, but one which makes a capital little interlude before the conjurer goes on to the big trick in which he is going to use that borrowed handkerchief.

In the same way, if the young amateur is going to perform some tricks with cards he should learn how to "play with the cards"—the description is my own, and I will explain it directly—so that he may always have something to do while he is waiting for someone to come forward and

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help him in a trick, or while he is explaining the nature of the trick he is about to perform.

By "playing with the cards" I mean performing a few little feats of manipulation which are not tricks, but which appear to an audience to be more or less mysterious and decidedly clever.

For instance, take the little feat known to conjurers as "riffing" the cards. Suppose you are doing a trick in which a card is supposed to go from one place to another, you "riffle" the cards and lead the audience to think the sound thus made was part of the trick, and that the trick could not have been performed in any other way.

"Riffing" is merely another word for bending part of the cards, and then releasing them quickly so that they make a kind of snapping noise. The "riffle" can be performed with two hands, or with only one hand. In the two-handed method, the conjurer holds the pack in his left hand with the thumb pressed down over the middle of the cards. He then brings his right hand up to the pack, presses down on the end nearest to him with the right thumb and bends some of the cards back with the middle finger of his right hand. Now, if he releases the cards he has bent back they will spring back, and the noise they make is the chief part of the "riffle". The audience do not know what has happened; they merely hear the noise and are persuaded that that is part of the trick.

To make the "riffle" with one hand, hold the cards by the edges, between the thumb and first finger of the left hand. The fingers should be about half-way down the cards. Now press lightly with the second finger on the back of the cards, and with the third finger draw some of the cards towards you by pulling on the corners of the cards. Immediately you have done this release the cards and they will spring back on the others and make the snapping noise which is the chief feature of the "riffle".

Another little flourish with the cards is that known as "springing" them. The cards are held in the right hand,

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with the middle finger at one end and the thumb at the other. Now the finger and thumb are brought very gradually together, so that the cards are forced to spring out of the hand, one at a time. The left hand is slightly curved to receive the cards and is held about nine inches away from the right hand. Of course, the young amateur who is going to learn this little flourish will not begin by holding the hands so far apart. He will find that if he holds the hands fairly close together to begin with he will still have some little difficulty in catching the cards as they spring out of the right hand. With practice, however, the distance between the two hands can soon be increased.

To make this flourish most effective, the conjurer should practise making a kind of sweeping movement, from the right to the left, with his hands while the cards are being sprung from one hand to the other. If he does this well, the conjurer will find that apparently his hands are nearly two feet apart when the cards are passing from one hand to the other.

The cards are slightly bent by this flourish, but they can soon be put right again by bending them in the opposite direction with the two-handed "riffle".

The cards themselves should be of good quality. There is very little "spring" in very inexpensive cards, and it is necessary that the cards should have plenty of "life" in them. The cards should be fairly thick, and if they have been used in any trick in which they have been slightly bent, they should be made quite straight again before they are sprung from one hand to the other. A very little irregularity in the cards—a broken card, or a card with a bent corner, and so on—will disturb the proper motion of the cards.

Another very effective little flourish is performed in the following way. The cards are held in the right hand with the thumb at one end and the first and second fingers at the other. The thumb and fingers are brought a shade nearer to each other, and thus the cards are slightly bent, but they are not allowed to spring from the hand. The

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pack is then turned with the face of the bottom card towards the audience. If the cards have been manipulated properly, the bending of them has had the effect of separating them and they can now be released one at a time. They will thus fall in one continuous line from the right hand, and the left hand is placed about eighteen inches below to receive them.

When this flourish is performed properly, the cards fall in such a way that they seem to be joined together. The conjurer should take care to let his audience see that the cards are unprepared.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PATTER

I think there will be no gainsaying the fact that when a man takes up conjuring seriously he encounters his greatest difficulty when he finds himself face to face with the question : " What shall I say ? " Unfortunately for some audiences amateur conjurers do not always realize what a difficult question this is to answer until they have begun their performance, and then, of course, it is too late to try and find a satisfactory answer to it. When one thinks of how few men can make a speech in public without a good deal of preparation one ought not to be surprised that " patter " is such a difficult matter to a conjurer. Yet, curiously enough, many conjurers hesitate to admit, when questioned on this subject, that their patter is not all that patter ought to be.

First of all, I should like to dispose of one or two popular errors—at least, they are errors in my opinion—with regard to patter. I have heard it suggested that one man can never succeed with another man's patter. That, to my mind, is pure rubbish. One might just as well say that an actor cannot score in a part unless he has written most of it himself. The reason why a conjurer does not always succeed when he uses the patter of another conjurer is because that patter does not happen to suit his particular style of delivery. Let me give an instance of what I mean.

One conjurer will have a very genial air with him. He

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will go through his performance with a smile all the time and look as though he enjoyed joking with his audience. Another conjurer will keep a straight face all the time and will be content with one or two jokes delivered in a dry, matter-of-fact kind of way ; he may possibly make his audience roar with laughter, but he will not smile himself. Both styles are equally good, but it will be obvious that the two men could not change patter without spoiling both their performances.

Another popular error about patter is that it must be full of puns. An overdose of puns is not good for any audience nowadays. A pun now and then is admissible, but to drag a pun into every other sentence is to weary any audience. It is not even necessary that the patter should be full of jokes. After all, although patter may be " half the trick " sometimes, the conjurer should remember that, first and foremost, he is a conjurer and not a comedian. I am sure that the majority of audiences would rather listen to plain, straightforward patter, with just a little seasoning of wit in it, than be compelled to hear a lot of old jokes tacked on to the description of a trick.

Before I conclude my fault-finding, let me add a suggestion which, I fear, will not be welcomed by many conjurers. It is just this. Would it not be as well sometimes to vary one's patter, to have, perhaps, two or three " sets " of patter for one trick. It should be fairly obvious, I think, that patter which would be quite acceptable to a West End drawing-room audience might not be at all suitable for a suburban Sunday-school or a village penny-reading. A vocalist would choose his songs in each place to suit his audience. Why should not a conjurer do the same thing with his patter ? I am sure that the little extra trouble involved by learning two or three sets of patter for each trick would be well worth taking, and that the conjurer who adopted this plan would never have to complain that his audience was dull. How often has one heard a conjurer complain after a performance—" Difficult lot of people—hadn't got a laugh among them."

With regard to the question, " What to say," I should

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give first place to a description of the trick. I think it was the late Sir W. S. Gilbert who once said that when a man wrote a play he had first of all to tell his audience what he was going to do ; then he had to tell them that he was doing it, and lastly, he had to tell them that he had done it. This advice may be taken to heart by every conjurer, for the cleverest performer cannot hold the attention of every member of the audience all the time, and unless he describes his trick it is just possible that many persons in his audience may be in the dark at the end of the trick as to what had apparently happened. In describing a trick, a conjurer can easily avoid saying, at an inconvenient moment, what he is going to do, but he can let everyone know what he is doing, what he has done, and can then let the climax of the trick speak for itself ; it may be necessary to add a few words even to that.

The description of a trick need not be a mere bald statement. Thus, for instance, suppose one is doing the billiard ball trick. It is not necessary to say : " I have here one solid billiard ball ; by holding it between the thumb and first finger of the left hand and waving it slightly in the air I cause it to multiply to two billiard balls." You can say that in a less direct way and still call attention to the one ball multiplying into two. Thus, " I have here a billiard ball. You may have heard of the old proverb that birds of a feather flock together. The same with billiard balls, that is to say, when you have one you very often have two," and so on.

The conjurer who finds any difficulty in thinking out his own patter need not hesitate about buying some patter ; if necessary, he can have it written specially for him, to suit his own particular style. It is far more honourable to do this than to " acquire " the patter of another conjurer by the simple process of taking it down in shorthand, and the artistic result is far more likely to be satisfactory.

Lastly we come to the question of how patter should be spoken. I think there can be no argument about that point. Patter should be spoken as though it was the

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conjurer's natural conversation. It should never be "reeled off" as though it was something learned by heart, although, as a matter of fact, the conjurer must be word perfect in his patter. The conjurer must take care to pronounce his words clearly, especially if he is performing in a hall, and he should pay particular attention to the end of his words; he must learn not to drop his voice at the end of a word or the end of a sentence.

There is just one other little matter which is worth more than a moment's attention from any conjurer who wishes to be a first-rate performer. Unless he is gifted with a ready wit he should provide himself with a little spare patter, especially if he is performing in drawing-rooms. This spare patter is to be used in case of interruptions. Some conjurers can get along quite nicely as long as they are free to do their tricks exactly in the way to which they are accustomed: that is to say, they are provided with patter to "cover" certain moves in each trick, but if there happens to be a troublesome child in their audience they are at a loss to know what to say. An experienced performer always has a joke or two "up his sleeve", in readiness for any troublesome youngster.

A PRODUCER IS ESSENTIAL

One often hears the criticism, "A good show, but badly produced." It should be the business of every magician to see that no such criticism can fairly be passed on his act. A good wine needs no bush; but a magical show, however good it may be, does. In this case, the production is "the bush". A skilful production means that every point is made, that every merit the show possesses is displayed to the greatest advantage, and that every effect is led up to and is finally presented clearly and boldly. An unskilful production means—well, exactly the reverse of all that.

The bigger the show, the more essential is it that the production should be adequate. A small act presented to a small audience may succeed on its intrinsic magical

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worth. But a full stage show cannot. In connection with that, the public demand good magic. But they also demand a well-ordered spectacle, and the magician must supply that. He cannot supply it unless he himself, or somebody else working with him, understands the art of production.

Do the great magicians pay sufficient attention to production? Most of them do. Notable instances are Horace Goldin and Howard Thurston among living magicians, and of those who have gone from us, The Great Lafayette. Lafayette had rare skill as a producer, and so have Goldin and Thurston. But some of the great magicians have not that skill, and are not wise enough to associate with them people who have. It would be invidious to mention living men in this connection. But Buatier de Kolta supplies a notable instance. He was a brilliant magician, but he never attained the success with the public which he deserved. The explanation of this is simple. His shows were fine things from the magical point of view, but poor things from the point of view of production. Many of their best effects were lost, or at any rate discounted by this. It has often been said that Buatier de Kolta was "no showman"; it may be said with equal truth that he was "no producer".

To sum up. All magicians should devote much attention to the production of their acts. If they have not themselves sufficient skill to produce in an adequate manner, they should obtain the assistance of somebody who has. One well-known magician of my acquaintance does this. He has on his staff a man who has the genius of production highly developed. This man travels with the show, and is constantly improving it. At almost every performance he is in front of the house. If there is any hitch, he notices it and takes steps to prevent it occurring again. He has his finger, so to speak, on the pulse of the public. The production is dependent on their fervour. The question, "Are they satisfied with it?" is always in his mind. The taste of the public changes quickly and inexplicably. A magical show must

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follow every change. It is the business of this man to see that the show in which he is interested is always up to date, and always running smoothly. And he carries out that business admirably. I have seen the show many times, and on every occasion have found it a masterpiece from the point of view of production.

A word of advice. If you are engaging a producer, make sure that he is fully qualified. There are men who advertise themselves as experts in the art, but who in fact know very little about it. Get a good man, and give him a fairly free hand. But do not leave the matter entirely to him. It is your show, and you should know something about it. Do as a certain magician friend of mine does. Occasionally at rehearsal, get an understudy to take your part. Then watch the whole show from the front of the house, and note down any defects in the production and any ideas for improvement that may occur to you.

SPECIALIZATION

The men who succeed in life are those who specialize. Even brilliant ability will produce only poor results if applied in a dozen different ways instead of being concentrated on one definite object. Success in magic involves specialization in a double sense. To obtain it a magician must specialize in magic as distinct from the other arts, and must also specialize in his particular show as distinct from the shows of other magicians.

The magicians who have reached the front rank have all specialized in this double sense. A dozen cases come to my mind. T. Nelson Downs, for instance, won fame and fortune by specializing in coin tricks. Some of my readers will doubtless remember his first great success in London. There is a story connected with it which will bear repetition here. The manager of one of the West End theatres booked Downs for a trial week. As an unknown man, he was billed in very small letters. But from the first night his coin act caught on with the London public. The great applause he received at every per-

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formance made him feel confident of a second week's engagement. It was in this cheerful spirit that he called at the theatre on the following Monday and scanned the new bill. Great was his disappointment when he failed to find his name in it. As he turned away he met the manager of the theatre, and remarked to him, "I see I'm off the bill this week." The reply came quickly. "Off the bill? Nonsense! Have another look." Downs did have another look. This time he found his name. It and the accompanying "King of Coins" filled the whole of the top half of the bill. Downs had previously looked only at the list of minor artistes. He had not dreamed of such a rapid promotion to the star-turn class.

The point of the story for the present purpose is that this rapid promotion was due to the fact that Downs had specialized in coin tricks. If he had given an ordinary miscellaneous programme his engagement at the theatre in question would probably have lasted only a week. As it was he remained in the bill there for nearly a year. Other magicians have similarly found the secret of success in specialization. Howard Thurston first "got there" with an act consisting of clever card tricks. Harry Houdini specialized in escapes, and Chung Ling Soo in Chinese magic. Many more notable instances could be given.

Accordingly I advise all ambitious magicians to specialize. But, I fancy, I hear somebody say, "Are there any more possibilities of specialization? Are not all the fields of activity in magic already claimed?" To this I reply that there are still many such possibilities, still many such fields unclaimed. Set yourself thinking. I will help you by jotting down here a few ideas that have just occurred to me.

Why not a magical ballet act? There are all sorts of possibilities in this. The magician will of course have to employ a troupe of trained dancers. The ballet will proceed on ordinary lines but will be interspersed with magical effects. These could be made very picturesque. The costumes of the dancers might change at the wave

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of a wand. Tambourines might become clusters of roses. One figure of a dance might with magical speed pass into another. Such an act, well carried out, would, I am sure, prove a very successful instance of specialization in magic.

An act that specialized in flowers should be very effective. Flowers could be produced, vanished, changed in colour, and so on. Other articles might also be specialized in to advantage. Flags of many nationalities, coloured papers of various sizes, walking-sticks of different patterns—all might supply the groundwork of good acts. Magicians should use their ingenuity in this matter of specialization. After all it is simply an affair of getting an original idea and carrying it out cleverly. Indeed, even the original idea is not always essential. A special act may sometimes be developed from another. Or one that has not been given for years may be revived. For instance, why not a hat act? It is true that this particular piece of specialization was invented by Hartz. But it is a long while since he was entertaining the public with it, and it would come as a novelty to audiences of the present day. Which of my readers will present it? Which of them will cover the whole of a stage floor with a magical production as Hartz used to?

DRESS CORRECTLY

Although we are enjoined in our youth not to judge anyone by appearances, and are further exhorted to remember that many an honest heart beats beneath a ragged coat, yet the fact remains that we do judge people by their appearance, and therefore may be quite certain that we ourselves are judged in the same way.

It has been suggested to me that conjurers are apt to forget this incontestable truth and that many a good conjurer handicaps himself by neglecting to pay proper attention to his personal appearance. I believe this is true. Let us see what happens when a conjurer goes to a house to give a performance in the drawing-room.

He hangs his hat and coat in the hall and is shown into

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the room. Every eye is at once focused on him. Most of the onlookers are women, and it is well known that women are keen critics of a man's clothes. Until the customary screen is put up for the temporary concealment of the conjurer, everyone is quizzing him, and if the man's shirt-front is not quite free from blemish, if his collar is just a little bit frayed at the corners, if his tie is a made-up one and not too good at that, if his shoes are not of the kind that should be worn with an evening suit, and if his clothes are badly fitting and out of shape, these faults are noticed ; the unfortunate conjurer has already prejudiced many members of his audience against him.

It may be argued that children are no judge of a man's clothes, and that therefore, inasmuch as a conjurer's usual duty is to amuse the children, he need not trouble himself about his clothes so long as his general appearance is fairly respectable. But not all conjuring performances are given for the entertainment of children and—the children never pay the fee. It is worth while to consider the likes and dislikes of those who provide one with one's bread and butter.

To come to practical matters, we may divide all conjuring performances, for the purpose of this article, into two classes, those in the afternoon, and those in the evening. I know that many experienced performers will not agree with me, but I am convinced that, whenever possible, a conjurer should wear ordinary afternoon clothes for a private afternoon performance. It seems to me that if the conjurer appears at four in the afternoon in clothes which an ordinary man never wears until he dresses for dinner he cannot fail to present rather a bizarre appearance. He may be—in fact, should be—quite unconscious of his clothes, but that evening suit will put him out of touch with his audience to a certain extent. The wondering eyes of little children will notice it and unconsciously they will form the idea that the conjurer is not one of them. To my mind that is just the impression that a good drawing-room conjurer ought not to create ; he should be “ in the picture ” all the time, and if he can play the

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part of an ordinary guest at the party so much the better for him. He cannot do this at an afternoon party if he is wearing evening clothes.

What should be worn? The conjurer should wear a black morning coat and waistcoat and dark striped trousers. The suit should be made by a good man and it should be free from all extravagances of style. There is an unwritten law which says that a man must not wear a double collar with this suit, but that law is often broken by well-dressed men. The right collar is of the "wing" kind. The tie should be black with a little figured pattern on it; the shirt may have a soft front, but it should have stiff cuffs; the shoes should be patents. The hands should be spotless and the nails well kept. The overcoat should be dark grey, or dark blue, or black.

Many conjuring entertainments are given at times at which one hardly knows whether to wear evening or afternoon clothes. A good safe rule is: When in doubt wear evening clothes. If a conjurer is going straight from an afternoon performance to an evening one he is bound to wear evening clothes and will always be excused by his afternoon host for doing so. I maintain, however, that if a conjurer has an engagement which is obviously an afternoon one, and if he can conveniently manage to wear the ordinary afternoon suit, he should not handicap himself by performing in the uniform of a waiter.

With regard to the evening suit, one can lay down some hard-and-fast rules. The suit should be the best that the conjurer can afford to pay for, and the style should be modern. Some conjurers wear dinner jackets and soft-fronted shirts in the evenings; I am sure they would create a better impression if they wore the ordinary tail-coats and stiff-fronted shirts. The shirt-front should be quite plain and it should have two stud-holes; the shirt should be of the kind that fastens in the front. A wing collar not less than two and a quarter inches deep and a white pique tie, tied by the wearer, should be worn. I remember once being present at a very clever performance by a man who did wonderful feats of knot-tying with a large silk

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handkerchief, but he had not taken the trouble to tie his own tie.

One little point about the tie. The makers of ties seem to cater for the needs of men with necks of abnormal size. Now, the evening bow should be neat and not very wide when it is tied, and this effect cannot be produced with a tie that is too long.

Some men have the sides of their evening trousers trimmed with silk braid. I would advise him not to wear a watch-chain, fob, or ring. The studs in his shirt-front should be plain gold, or white enamel, or single pearls.

Strictly speaking, the waistcoat of this suit should be a white pique one, with buttons of mother-o'-pearl or white enamel, but a black waistcoat is not wrong. The overcoat to be worn with this suit in the cold weather should be a thick dark-grey ulster ; the conjurer will also need a plain white silk scarf and an opera hat. If the conjurer is going on a railway journey into the country he may wear a felt hat, but if the journey is a long one he should travel in an ordinary lounge suit and pack his evening clothes.

I am convinced that it pays a conjurer to give proper attention to all these little details. In short, one may say that the art of dressing well resembles the art of conjuring well, and the art of doing most other things well, in that it consists in paying due regard to what are usually, but erroneously, called the " little details ".

METHODS IN HAT LOADING

Before a conjurer can magically produce a number of articles from a hat which the audience believe to be empty, he must first " load " the hat, to use the technical phrase. That is to say, he must secretly get all the articles into the hat. The parcel of things to be used in the trick is called a " load ".

The chief point to remember when doing any hat trick—in fact, any trick—is to keep all one's movements quite natural. Then the suspicions of the audience are not aroused. For instance, if the conjurer wants to learn a

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hat trick, let him take an empty hat in his hands and go into his room and do the trick without the "load". Let him offer the hat to the audience—an imaginary audience, of course—and then in taking it back, or after he has placed it on his table, let him think to himself at what moment he could introduce a "load" into the hat without arousing the suspicions of the audience.

I know that this is not the usual way of teaching this trick, but I believe it to be a good way because the conjurer who carries out these instructions will be sure to use the hat in a natural way and in the end he will probably produce a very good and mystifying trick. I might tell him that in taking back the hat he should put it, crown upwards, on the table for a moment while he draws up his sleeves. I might then go on to tell him that in the act of picking up the hat again he should put the thumb on the brim and the fingers at the back of his table. The fingers will then be in a position to slip into a loop of thread or wire attached to any "load" which he may have hanging behind his table.

That would be one way of teaching the trick, and I have no doubt that some of my readers will find that they can easily learn how to "load" a hat in that way. The only thing to be said against that method is that the tablecloth must be rather deep in order that the load may be hidden and the conjurer must learn all the movements so that he can go through them without thinking of what he is doing. If the conjurer finds that these movements are awkward for him after he has practised them a few times, then by all means let him try another method. He may have some piece of apparatus on his table behind which he can hide his "load", or, if the room is large, he may be able to "load" the hat while he is returning to his table after he has shown the empty hat to his audience. The point I wish to make is that the conjurer should try to be as natural as possible, and that if he finds he can get the "load" into the hat by any other method in quite a natural way, then he should certainly employ that method.

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However, in order to assist the learner in discovering a good way of loading the hat I will give him a way which, I believe, will be easy of execution, and my reason for thinking so is that it is my own method. The conjurer begins by borrowing a hat, or, if he has a hat already on his table, he takes it down to his audience and asks them to make sure that it is empty. Now, the moment he does this all eyes will be upon him, for any audience will probably guess that the conjurer is now going to do a hat trick and that the trick will consist in producing a lot of things out of the hat. I suggest that the conjurer can throw the audience off the scent by proceeding in this way.

Let him be provided with a false finger, such as is used for the production of a handkerchief, but let the finger be "loaded" with a piece of newspaper. The larger the piece of paper the better, so long as it can be got into the finger and pulled out again without a struggle. After the conjurer has taken the hat into his hands he holds it for a moment in his left hand while he drops his right hand to his side and gets the false finger out of his right pochette (that is, the secret pocket on his trousers) and gets it into position on his hand. Possibly the conjurer may find it more convenient to have the finger on his table behind some piece of apparatus, or he can have it in his right-hand trousers pocket. If he has a handkerchief in that pocket he can easily get the finger into position on his hand in the act of taking the handkerchief out of his pocket. He then puts the handkerchief to his lips for a second and returns it to his pocket. In any case the false finger "loaded" with a piece of ordinary newspaper is in position.

Now the conjurer can still show that his hands are empty, for the finger will not be noticed. Addressing the owner of the hat the conjurer says: "Excuse me, sir, but I think when you bought this hat it was a little too large for you, wasn't it?" If the owner says "Yes", so much the better, but if he shakes his head no harm is done. The conjurer continues: "I think it must have

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been too large because I see that the brim is padded out with paper." He then puts his hand into the hat, pulls out the paper from the false finger, and unfolds it. The paper will be so large that when it is produced the audience will naturally be surprised and will wonder how the conjurer managed to "palm" it into the hat without being detected. The conjurer holds the paper in front of him with the thumb behind it and the fingers in front of it. If the paper is held in this position it will be an excellent "cover" behind which another load can be introduced into the hat, and the easiest place to get this "load" from will be the left-hand side of the opening of the waistcoat. (I am presuming that the performer is in evening clothes.) If the "load" which has been tucked into the left-hand side of the waistcoat has a small loop of thin wire attached to it, it can easily be dragged out behind the paper, because the conjurer's thumb can slip into the loop. The "load" is hidden behind the paper. The conjurer brings the paper forward a little and quietly drops the "load" into the hat. This "load" can consist of a lot of "spring flowers", which open directly the paper band surrounding them is broken, and these can be wrapped up in a few handkerchiefs. The conjurer asks the owner of the hat if he is fond of gardening and shows the hat full of flowers. After these have been tipped out the handkerchiefs can be produced, or, if he likes, the conjurer can produce the handkerchiefs first, and in the act of tipping out the flowers he can bring the hat up behind a chair or table, and so gets in another "load" which has been hanging on a pin behind the chair or table.

These movements are all natural and will be found to be very deceptive. Of course, the conjurer must affect to be very surprised when he "finds" something in the hat, and he should not "find" it directly the "load" is in the hat. He should fill up a second or two with patter while he holds the hat well away from him; then the trick will be extremely mystifying even to those who "know something" about the art of magic.

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CHAPTER VIII

CARD TRICKS

THE most blasé audience in the world will sit up and listen and look if the magician can show them some first-rate card tricks. Nowadays, everyone plays cards and so everyone is interested in card tricks; the magician who boasts—I have heard of this being done—that he does not do card tricks because “everyone does card tricks” is making a big mistake. The old saying, “It isn’t what you do but the way you do it that matters,” is very true. I am sure that the magician who is not always able to present a dozen or more tip-top card tricks will soon earn the reputation of being a back number.

Now, I suppose that there has been more pure “bunkum” said and written about card tricks than about any other branch of magic. The public have been led to believe that card tricks are the most difficult of all tricks, and that a card expert has to practise all day and every day in order to keep his fingers and hands in good condition for his performances.

I admit that some card tricks are very difficult and need a good deal of practice, but one is not bound to show such tricks. There are others, with equally good effects, which are quite easy. Moreover, some of the difficult tricks can be performed by simplified methods which make the working of the tricks very easy. The public are not interested in the methods which the magician uses; they may be difficult or easy; it is all one to them. Therefore, the wise magician, not wanting to have to sit up late at night practising tricks, uses the simple method whenever it is possible to do so—that is,

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when the simple method will give the same effect as the very difficult one.

A good number of excellent tricks can be performed by the aid of trick cards, which have the appearance of ordinary cards. The general public have heard that gamblers use marked cards for the purpose of cheating, but the general public know nothing of trick cards which have been devised for the assistance of magicians who wish to escape from the drudgery of constant practice.

For example, a great many tricks begin in the same way. The audience are asked to take two or three cards from the pack, to look at them, remember them, and return them to the pack. The performer eventually finds the cards and produces them in a startling way.

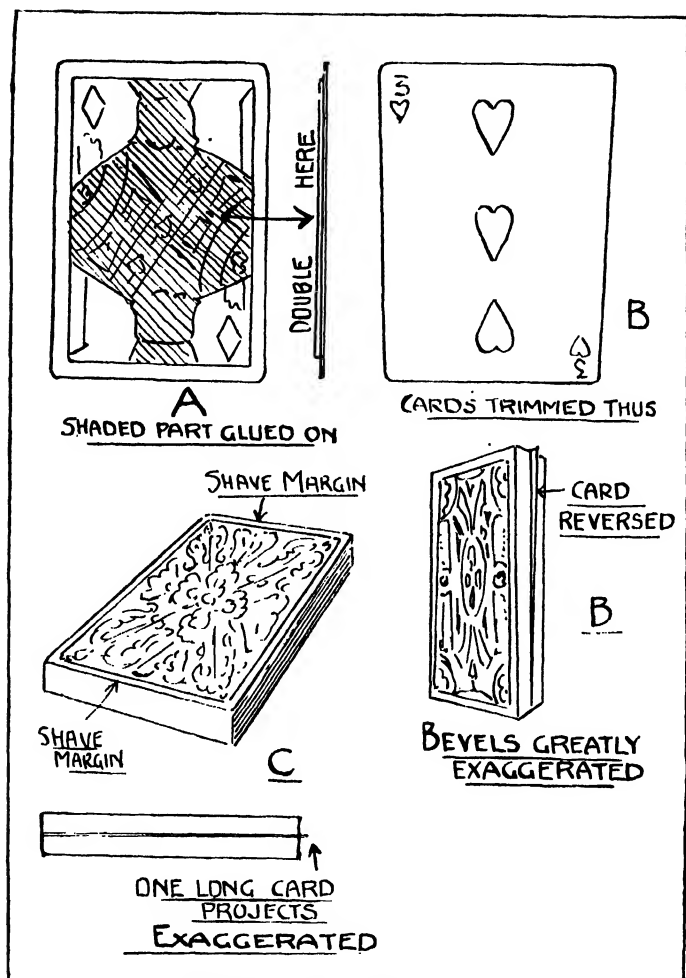
Now, some of the sleight-of-hand methods for keeping track of cards which the audience have chosen and returned to the pack are very difficult, and a magician who does not wish to fail has to practise hard if he is going to use those methods successfully. But with the aid of a few trick cards the same effect can be produced without any trouble or worry.

A useful trick card can be made by sticking two cards together. If the reader will make a trick card of this kind and then put it in a pack he will find that he can always cut at the thick card by merely holding the pack securely in his hands and running his thumb along the edges of one end of the pack. If the audience have taken three cards for a trick the performer has only to cut the pack at the thick card and he can be sure of having all three cards together and, what is more, of being able to find them when he wants them.

A similar effect is produced by having a pack, with the exception of one card, trimmed slightly at both ends. There is thus one card slightly longer than the others, and the performer can easily cut at that card.

A *biseauté* pack provides an easy method of performing a number of good card tricks. A *biseauté* pack is tapered, all the cards being slightly narrower at one end

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INTRODUCTION TO CARD TRICKS.

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than at the other. If three cards are taken out, reversed, and returned they can easily be found again even after the pack has been well shuffled.

Even some of our leading card experts are not above using trick cards at times, but of course they take care to keep themselves in practice with tricks of pure sleight of hand. The reader who wishes to do tricks of this kind should start by buying highly polished cards of very good quality—neither very thick nor very thin. Cheap cards add enormously to the difficulties of a man who wishes to rely solely on sleight of hand.

The following tricks are novel and not too difficult ; indeed, some of them are very easy, but they should not be despised on that account.

A GOOD TRICK PACK

This pack will serve as a good, safe forcing pack, but it can also be used in combination with any trick in which the performer wishes to cause a card to disappear magically.

The pack can be used as a forcing pack for one card in this way. The performer holds the pack in his left hand with his thumb over the lower end ; the thumb should grip the pack tightly and it is as well to square up the pack before beginning the trick.

Holding the pack in this way, the performer puts his right hand over it, lifts up the end nearest to the audience with his middle finger, and allows the cards to spring back from his middle finger. The object of this movement is to allow the audience to see that all the cards are different, but of course the performer does not call attention to that fact. He idly springs the cards in his way once or twice, as though he were merely playing with the cards, and as he approaches someone in the audience he says : “ I have here a nice pack of cards—just fifty-two of them ; I’ve taken the joker out because I didn’t want it ; jokers are always troublesome. I shall be glad if someone will cut the pack, look at the card

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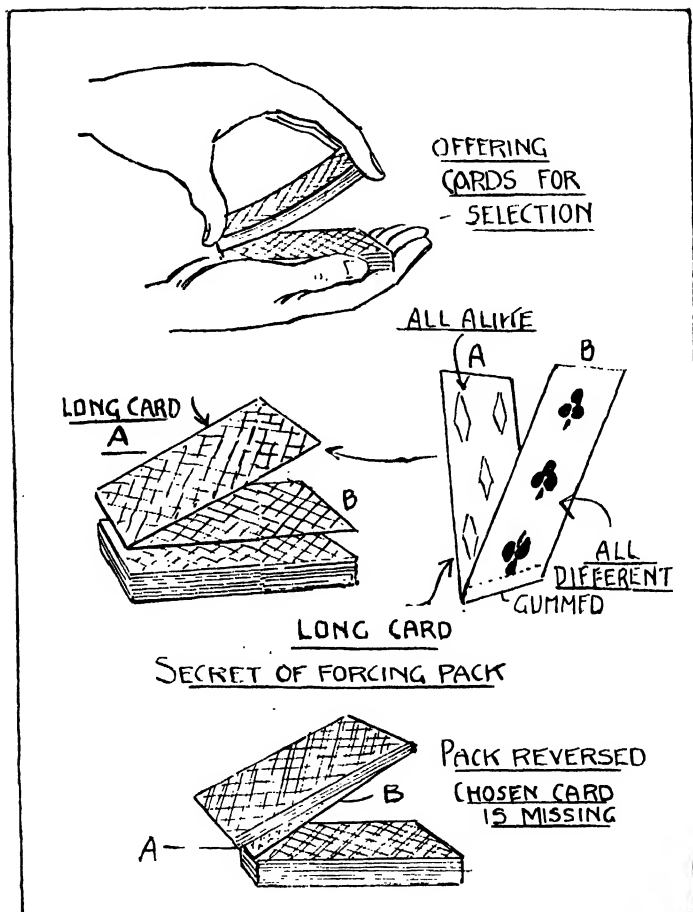
at which he has cut and then replace the cards on the top of the pack."

The performer squares up the pack and holds it in his left hand by the ends, so that when he asks someone to cut the pack that person is bound to cut by holding the cards by the sides. This is important. The cut portion is quickly replaced and the performer goes on to the next part of the trick. Although the person who has cut the pack has appeared to have a free choice the performer has really forced a card.

The pack is made up of "long" and "short" cards, arranged alternately, but all the "short" cards are alike and each is pasted at one end to the "long" card above it. Thus, when the performer springs the cards in the way described, it is impossible for a member of the audience to see the "short" cards; the "long" cards cover them. Naturally, when the performer holds the pack by the ends and gets someone to cut the pack at the sides, that person is bound to cut at a short card. If the person were allowed to cut the pack by the ends he might possibly discover that the card at which he was looking was stuck at one end to the card above it, and it is just as well not to run that risk.

If the performer wishes to cause the magical disappearance of the card which a spectator has looked at he merely has to square up the pack and then spring the cards again in the way described. The chosen card cannot be seen, and so the performer can safely say that the card has disappeared, but he should not spend too long on that point. There is just the chance that the assistant may want to run through the pack himself and so satisfy himself that the card at which he cut really has disappeared. This is just a little "snag" which a good showman will guard against; there may be times when it will be as well to switch the forcing pack for an ordinary pack minus the forced card.

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A GOOD TRICK PACK.

G R E A T T R I C K S R E V E A L E D

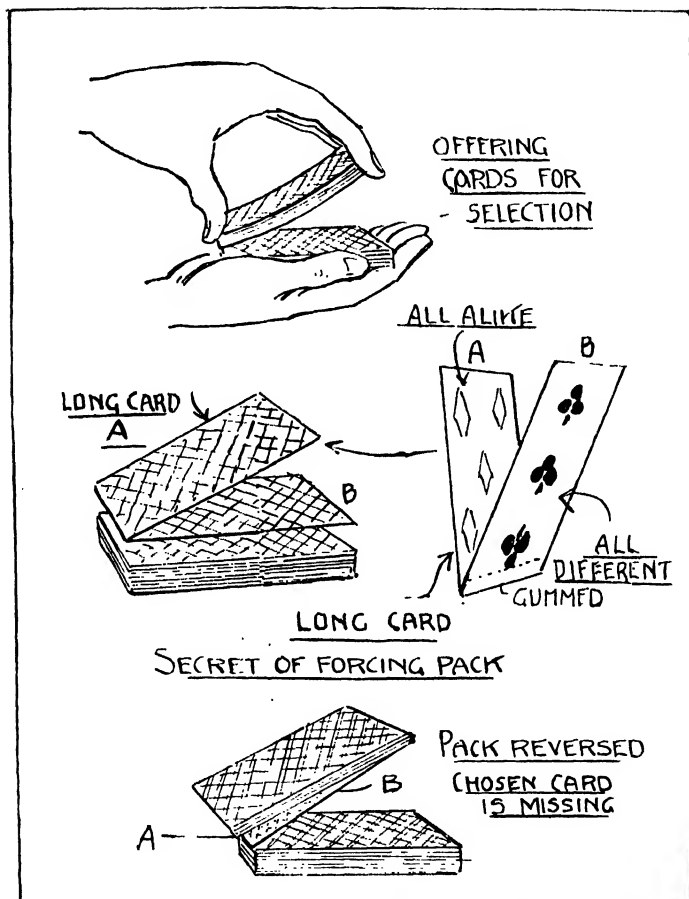
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A GOOD TRICK PACK.

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THE MISSING CARD DISCOVERED

This effect is not intended to be used by itself as a trick ; it should form the end of a trick in which a card has been chosen by a member of the audience and caused to disappear. (The forcing pack described in this section will come in well for the first part of the trick.)

The performer shows two plaques ; at least, that is how he describes them, but, as a matter of fact, they are two pieces of coloured cardboard. The plaques are shown—back and front—and are then placed together. An elastic band is slipped round them and they are rested against a candlestick on the table.

Having had a card selected and having caused it to vanish, the performer then goes to the plaques, removes the elastic and shows that the card has found its way between the two plaques.

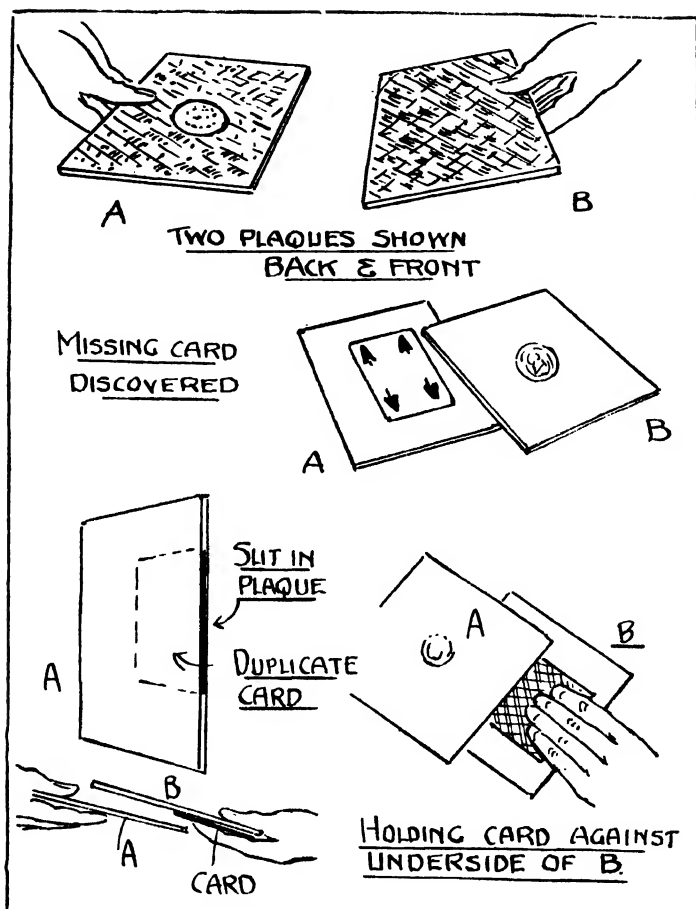
The card is really hidden in a slit in one of the plaques. In showing the plaques the performer allows the card to slip out, but he hides it with the other plaque and holds it against that one with his fingers. Then the other plaque is placed over it and the trick is practically over. The illustrations show how the plaques should be handled to bring about the effect.

AN OPTICAL ILLUSION

The performer shows the faces of three cards—two aces with a king in the middle. He turns his hand over, showing the backs of the cards, and asks someone to remove the king ; naturally, this person takes the middle card, but it turns out to be an ace. The performer turns over the two cards he is holding and shows that they are two aces. He explains that the trick is really an optical illusion and that the spectator was deceived when he thought he saw a king between the two aces.

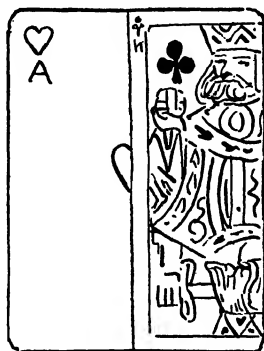
The trick is done with the aid of a faked card. (See illustration.) Half the card is an ace and half a king.

CARD TRICKS

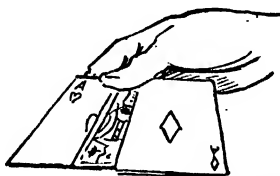


THE MISSING CARD DISCOVERED.

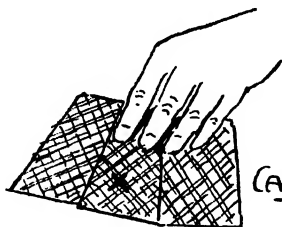
GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



FAKED ACE
WITH 1/2 KING
PASTED ON

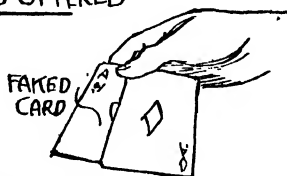


X. ACE CLUBS UNDER
CARDS SHOWN



CARDS OFFERED

IN REVERSING PUSH
OUT CARD X WHICH
IS TAKEN FOR KING



SHOWING TWO
REMAINING CARDS

AN OPTICAL ILLUSION.

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Over the king portion of the faked card the performer places two aces but holds them close together so that they appear as one card ; of course they are held in such a way that part of the king is still visible. The illustration shows exactly how the cards are held ; to the audience they appear to be two aces with a king in the middle.

When he turns the cards over the performer pushes out one of the aces, and the spectator sees three cards and is quite certain that the king is the middle one, but when he takes this card he finds that it is an ace. The performer then closes the two cards he is holding together so that the real ace hides the king portion of the faked card.

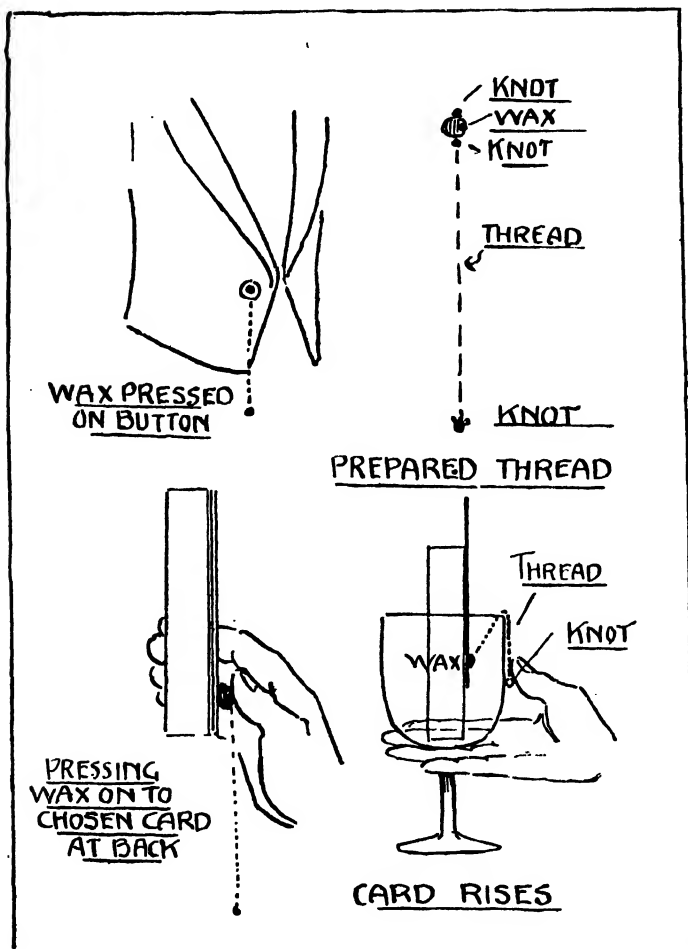
An expert performer would then put the two cards on the top of the pack on the top of which he had secretly placed an ace. He would then palm away the faked card. Therefore, if someone wanted to see the two cards the performer could at once hand the pack to him and the very inquisitive spectator would then find that the top two cards were ordinary aces.

THE RISING CARD

To perform the trick of the " rising cards " at very close quarters is by no means easy ; there are times when it is almost impossible to do the trick without running a big risk of being caught out. The following method of presenting the trick with one card can be used with safety at very close quarters, and an expert performer will have no difficulty in using it with two or three cards.

A card is chosen by a member of the audience and returned to the pack ; it is almost needless for me to add that the performer brings the card to the top of the pack, palms it away for a moment, and gives the pack out for a thorough shuffling by a spectator. When the performer receives the pack again he palms the chosen card on the top of it and drops it into a glass with a foot. He then picks up the glass by holding it between

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



THE RISING CARD.

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the second and third fingers of his right hand, which is held with the palm upwards. Waving his left hand over the cards, the performer calls upon the chosen card to rise, and the card obeys him. The cards and the glass can be examined immediately.

When the performer has palmed the chosen card back on to the pack he presses a little piece of wax on one end of the card. Attached to this wax is a short piece of black cotton, and at the other end of the cotton is a small button. The cotton can be attached, in readiness for the trick, to the performer's coat by simply pressing the wax on the lowest button. (See illustration.)

In dropping the cards into the glass the performer takes care to put the waxed end in first and to keep the end with the button on it outside the glass.

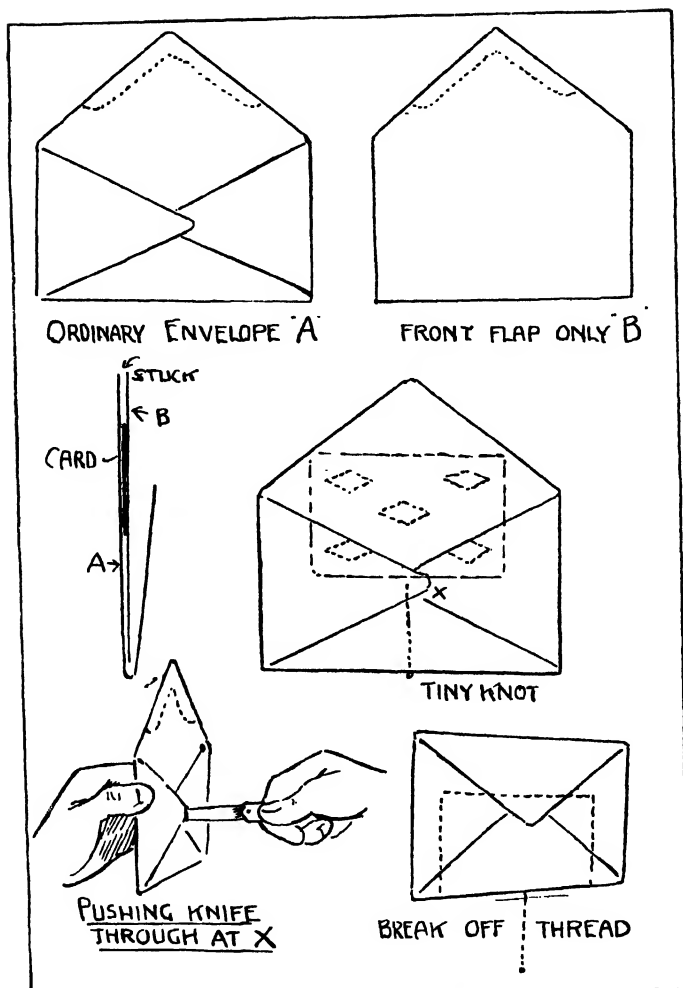
Now, if the glass is held in the way described the performer can easily cause the card to rise by merely pulling the button down with his thumb. He then scrapes off the waxed end with his thumb and gives the cards and glass for examination—if he wishes to do so.

If this method is used the audience cannot possibly see the cotton.

THE ENVELOPE AND THE CARD

The trick envelope which I am about to explain will be found to be very useful in any trick in which a card has to be made to appear magically. For example, the envelope could be used in combination with the forcing pack of cards explained in this section. The performer leads off by showing an empty envelope. He points out that when the flap is sealed down the envelope is completely closed up, and that then any man who wanted to put something in the envelope would either have to open the flap or make a hole in the envelope—say, in the centre. With this the performer sticks the blade of his pocket-knife right through the envelope. (The performer has led up to this movement in his patter so that everyone may be convinced that the envelope is really

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



THE ENVELOPE AND CARD.

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empty.) The performer then seals up the envelope and throws it on his table.

The next thing to do is to cause a chosen card to vanish magically from the pack. The forcing pack explained on another page shows how that effect can be obtained. The performer then goes to the envelope and takes out the card, and although everyone can see the hole in the envelope the card is not damaged in any way; there is no hole in the card.

To prepare the trick envelope proceed in this way. Take two envelopes with deep flaps. Cut away the front and the flap from one of them and put this piece in the other envelope. Between the two flaps of the envelope place a duplicate of the card which you are going to force. This card must have a short thread attached to the middle of one side, and the thread must be passed to the bottom of the envelope and out through a tiny hole. A knot should be tied to prevent the thread from slipping back through the hole. The two flaps are then lightly stuck together.

It will be seen that after the performer has shown this envelope as an ordinary envelope and has convinced the audience that it is empty—a very simple matter—he can run a knife right through the centre of the envelope, at the point marked “X” in the illustration. He then takes the knife out and in closing down the flap (really two flaps stuck together) he secretly gets hold of the knot on the thread and pulls the card down into the body of the envelope. The envelope is then thrown on the table with the thread under it.

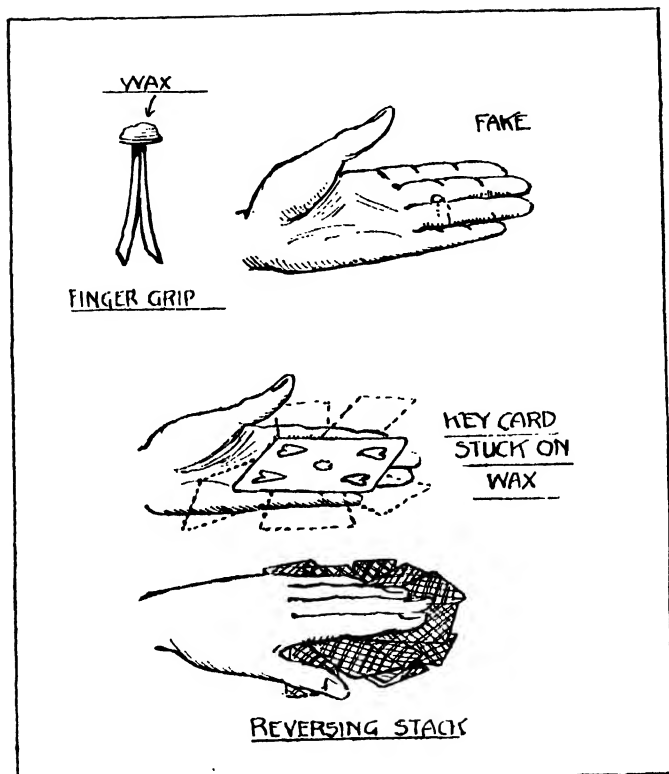
When the performer wishes to show the card at the end of the trick he cuts away the lower part of the envelope and thus cuts through the thread. The trick is done.

THE HYPNOTIZED CARDS

I am indebted to my old friend, Mr. G. W. Hunter, for the secret of this good effect.

The performer gives the pack to a member of the audi-

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



THE HYPNOTIZED CARDS.

CARD TRICKS

ence and asks that about a dozen cards may be handed to him. This action would seem to prove that the cards are not prepared in any way for the trick, and, as a matter of fact, they are not. Placing one card on the outstretched fingers of his left hand the performer goes on to arrange the other cards round it, in the form of a rosette. Then, to the surprise of the audience, he turns his hand over, but the cards remain close to the fingers.

The illustrations give the trick away. While the cards are in the possession of the audience the performer gets hold of a little fake, similar in every way to an ordinary paper-fastener, but painted flesh colour and with the head covered with good wax. The fake is gripped between the second and third fingers with the waxed head inside the hand. The performer, in placing the first card on his fingers, presses on it and so causes it to adhere to the wax. Thus the card is held firmly against the fingers and, after the other cards have been tucked in round the first card, the hand can be turned over without any fear that the cards will fall.

Afterwards the performer takes the cards, one at a time, from his hand and throws them out to the audience. The card which is stuck to the fake is pulled away from it, and the fake is disposed of in any way that the performer fancies ; it can be allowed to fall behind a handkerchief on the table.

AN UNCANNY TRICK

In this trick the performer appears to know what someone is going to do before he does it !

The performer gives a pack of cards to a member of the audience and asks him to take it out of the room with him.

" But, wait one moment," says the performer, as he picks up a slip of paper and writes on it : " You will select the . . . "

He shows this to the man who is going to help him with the trick. Then the performer adds something—but without showing the assistant what he has written—

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folds up the paper and tosses it into a hat. He then asks the assistant to take the pack of cards out of the room for a moment, to shuffle it, take out any card he pleases, look at it, remember it, and then put it back in the pack.

"I think," says the performer, "that you will now be convinced that I do not influence your choice in any way."

When the assistant returns to the room the performer asks him if he has looked at a card and then asks what the card was. We will suppose the card was the two of spades. The performer picks up the hat and asks his assistant to take out the slip of paper himself, unroll it, and read out what he finds written on it. The assistant takes out the slip and reads: "You will select the two of spades."

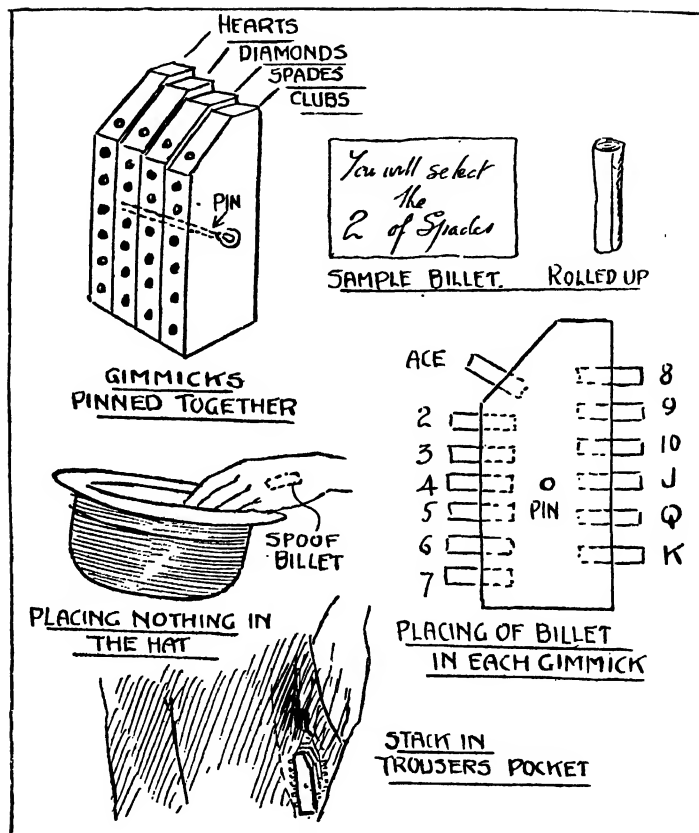
"And now," adds the performer, "if you keep the slip of paper and study it you will be able to find out just how the trick is done—perhaps."

The trick needs careful working, but if the instructions are followed the performer will have no difficulty.

After the performer has written the words, "You will select the . . ." on a slip of paper and shown them to the man who is helping him, the performer adds anything he likes, without showing the slip again to the man, folds it up, and apparently drops it into a hat. He holds the slip between his thumb and first finger, and when his hand is in the hat he allows the slip to fall on his second and third fingers, and he can then palm it. When he takes his hand out of the hat the audience see the first finger and thumb are apart and they should thus be convinced that the slip was dropped into the hat. While the performer is talking to the assistant, telling him what he is to do, the performer drops the slip into his coat pocket.

In his right-hand trousers pocket the performer has four little "gimmicks". That is the name given to them by the inventor of the trick, Frank Lane, but I do not find the word "gimmick" in the dictionary. The four "gimmicks" are four little pieces of wood with thirteen small holes in each piece. The four pieces of wood can be held together by a pin running through their centres

CARD TRICKS



AN UNCANNY TRICK.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED

—as shown in the illustration—or by an elastic band round them.

In the holes in each "gimmick" are slips of paper rolled up and on each piece is written, "You will select the . . ." (followed by the name of a card). By keeping one piece of wood for clubs, another for spades, another for diamonds, and the last for hearts, and arranging the papers in an order which he can remember, the performer can get hold of any paper he wants without the slightest difficulty and very quickly.

The working of the trick will now be clear. When the man returns to the room the performer talks to him, asks him the name of the card and impresses on him that he had a perfectly free choice, etc. etc. The performer continues to patter for a moment or two while he is getting out the slip of paper on which the name of the card is written; he clips the paper between his second and third fingers and walks over to the hat. In picking up the hat the performer allows the slip to fall secretly into it and he says to the assistant: "I won't touch the paper myself; perhaps you will kindly take it out yourself, unfold it, and read out what is written on it. I think you will find that you took the very card which I said you would take before you left the room."

The assistant reads out the paper and finds that the performer prophesied correctly.

HUNTER'S "SPELLING BEE" IN VARIOUS FORMS

For the simplest form of the Spelling Bee Trick take thirteen cards (either mixed or all of one suit) and arrange them as follows:

3, 8, 7, Ace, Queen, 6, 4, 2, Jack, King, 10, 9, 5.

These are placed face downwards in the left hand, the 3 being the top card.

To spell, the top card is taken off and put at the bottom, saying "A". Then the next card is taken from the top and placed at the bottom in the same manner as you say "C", then the next card in the same manner, saying

CARD TRICKS

"E, Ace". The next card (the Ace) is thrown on the table, and so on throughout the trick.

For Full Pack

The following arrangement spells the cards in alternate suits—Diamonds—Spades—Hearts—Clubs. The figure 1 indicates an Ace.

9C, JD, 5C, 1D, KS, KH, 7S, 2D, 6H, QD, 10H, 1H, 3C, 3D, 8C, KD, 8S, 7C, 4D, 2H, 1S, 1C, 7H, 5D, 9S, 2S, JH, 6D, QC, 6C, 10S, 3H, 3S, 7D, 4C, 2C, 8H, JS, 4S, 8D, JC, 4H, QH, KC, 9D, 5S, 10C, QS, 10D, 9H, 6S, 5H.

First spell the Ace, then the two, etc.

* * * * *

The following arrangement is devised for the four Aces to be spelt in succession, then the four twos, etc.

9, 8, 5, 1, 3, J, 7, 1, K, 6, 4, 1, K, 10, 9, 1, 6, 4, 8, 2, 7, Q, 6, 2, 4, Q, J, 2, 10, 6, 4, 2, 9, 8, Q, J, 5, 3, Q, 7, 10, 9, 5, 3, 8, K, K, 7, 5, 3, J, 10.

The following arrangement spells the Ace, two, three, etc. in mixed suits.

9, J, 5, 1, K, K, 7, 2, 6, Q, 10, 1, 3, 3, 8, K, 8, 7, 4, 2, 1, 1, 7, 5, 9, 2, J, 6, Q, 6, 10, 3, 3, 7, 4, 2, 8, J, 4, 8, J, 4, Q, K, 9, 5, 10, Q, 10, 9, 6, 5.

With the following formula the highest and lowest cards of a suit are spelt alternately, thus: The Ace is spelt first, then the two. The cards should be placed side by side (1) (2) as shown.

After the first two cards are spelt, the King comes next, and then the three. These are placed upon their respective heaps. Thus the left-hand heap is in descending sequence, and the right-hand heap in the ascending sequence. All the Clubs appear first, followed by the Hearts, Spades and Diamonds.

9C, 4H, KD, 1C, 8H, 6S, 8S, 2C, 7C, JH, 5D, 1S, KC, 4S, QD, 8C, 5H, 9D, 3C, 2S, 1H, 9S, 10H, 1D, QC, 2H, JS, JD, 6H, 4C, KS, KH, 8D, 3D, JC, 2D, 9H, 5S, 3H, 5C, 7S, 3S, 6D, 10C, 4D, 7H, QH, 6C, 10S, 10D, 7D, QS.

The following arrangement brings the cards in alternate

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED

can be done anywhere under any conditions, and there are not many good card tricks of which that can be said.

A FINE THOUGHT-READING TRICK

I am confident that readers who master this trick will agree with me that it is one of the "plums" of the book. Here is the effect as the audience see it, and the reader will notice that the performer breaks one of the first rules of magic—that rule which says that the magician must not tell the audience what he is going to do until he has secretly done it.

The performer asks if someone will help him in a simple thought-reading experiment; the assistant is asked to sit down and make himself comfortable.

"Now," says the performer, "you will agree, I am sure, that there are only two kinds of cards in a pack—red and black. I want you to choose which we shall use in the trick, and I should like everyone to notice that you have a free choice." (We will suppose that the assistant has said "Red".) "Red. Very well. I shall be glad if you will take a red card out of the pack and think of it, but—wait a moment. I am going to try to discover beforehand what card you will take and, therefore, what your thoughts will be; in other words, if I succeed, I shall convince you that I knew what you were going to think about before you knew yourself. Of course, I don't guarantee that I shall bring this off at the first attempt, but if I do I think you will agree that it has been a very unusual kind of thought-reading experiment. If you took a card now and thought of it I might be able to discover what card it was by telepathy, but you will see that telepathy does not come into this experiment because I am going to try to think now of what you will be thinking of in two or three minutes."

The performer takes a card from the pack and, after a little hesitation, writes on it and puts it into his pocket.

"Now," says the performer, holding the cards out before his assistant and spreading them out, "will you

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please take one red card from the pack and remember, please, you have a free choice."

The assistant takes a card and, at the performer's request, looks at it intently and thinks of it.

"So that there shall not be any mistake about this," say the performer, "will you please show the card to the audience. Thank you. Now will you show it to me. The five of hearts (it can be any red card); I had an idea that you would take that card and think of it, so I wrote the five of hearts on the card I put in my pocket. Will you please tell the audience that I am speaking the truth."

Here the performer puts his hand into his pocket and takes out a card with "five of hearts" written in pencil on it. The experiment has succeeded.

To come straight to the point—the explanation—the pack is arranged with red and black cards alternately and at the end of each black card is written the name of the red card immediately above it. To a card expert no further explanation will be necessary, but as some of my readers may not be experts I give further explanations.

When the performer takes a card and writes on it he writes anything he pleases and, without showing the card, puts it into his pocket.

When the performer holds the pack before his assistant and spreads out the cards he does not expose many cards at a time and he holds his hands at the lower end of the pack so that it is impossible for the assistant to see the ends of the cards. (Remember, every black card has the name of the red card above it written on it in pencil.)

When the assistant has taken a card the performer divides the pack at that place, holding the top portion in his right hand, and then shuffles those cards under the portion held in his left hand. This leaves the top card in its place, and the performer merely has to palm it off and into his pocket and take it out of his pocket at the right time. He leaves the card on which he wrote something in his pocket.

The trick can be presented in a slightly different way. The second version may not appear, at first sight, to be

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as good as the first because the performer does not state that he will read the thoughts of his assistant before the trick begins. On the other hand, the performer does not have to put a card in his pocket and therefore does not have to palm a card, and that point may be appreciated by any reader who may not be too certain of his ability to palm a card at very close quarters and put it into his pocket.

The preliminary part of the trick is much the same, except that the performer says he will try to read the thoughts of his assistant ; he cannot claim to be able to know what his assistant is going to think of before the assistant knows it himself.

A card is taken and the pack is manipulated in the way already described, leaving the card with the name of the card which has been taken, at the top of the pack. The performer picks up that card and pretends to write on it ; his pencil merely goes over the name already there. Then the performer throws the card, face downward, on the table, and brings the trick to a conclusion in the way described.

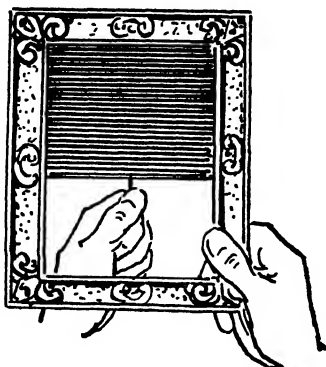
The first version, which is the original one, is by far the better of the two to my mind and I think the majority of my readers will agree with me, but the second version is a very good trick for the man who cannot palm neatly.

A S I M P L E C A R D F R A M E

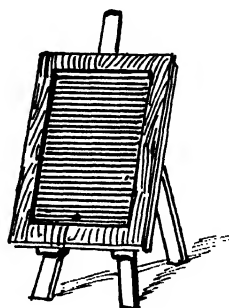
The trick begins in the customary way ; a member of the audience is asked to " take a card, please ".

The card is returned to the pack and the performer leaves it there while he shows an ornamental frame to the audience. The performer explains that the frame was made for a young man who knew the very best girl in the world. The young man wished to keep a photograph of this wonderful girl in the frame, and in order that the sun should not cause the photograph to fade the young man had " this spring blind " fitted to the frame.

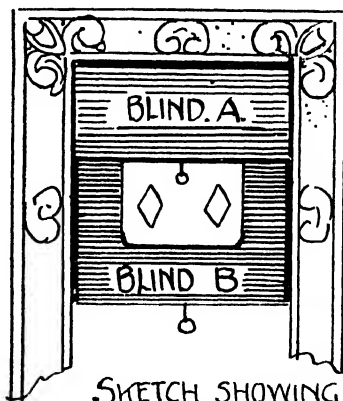
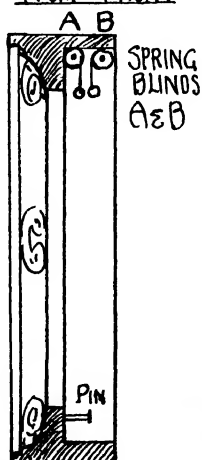
CARD TRICKS



BLIND PULLED DOWN
FROM FRONT



BACK OF FRAME
BLIND DOWN



SKETCH SHOWING
BOTH BLINDS.

A SIMPLE CARD FRAME.

G R E A T T R I C K S R E V E A L E D

Here the performer draws down a blind in the frame and releases it. The performer continues :

“Unfortunately—or fortunately ; it depends which way you look at it—there came a time when the young man didn’t want the frame any longer and he gave it to me with the suggestion that perhaps I might make a trick out of it. Well, of course, one can’t do very much with a frame with a spring blind in it, and so this is a very simple little trick. I’ll draw down the blind once more and leave the frame here on this easel.”

The frame is turned with its back to the audience. The performer causes the card chosen by a member of the audience to vanish, and when he turns the frame round the audience see the card adhering to the spring blind.

The performer spoke the truth when he said that the trick was a simple one, but it is none the worse for that. The artist has given the secret away, for the reader will see at once how the trick is done.

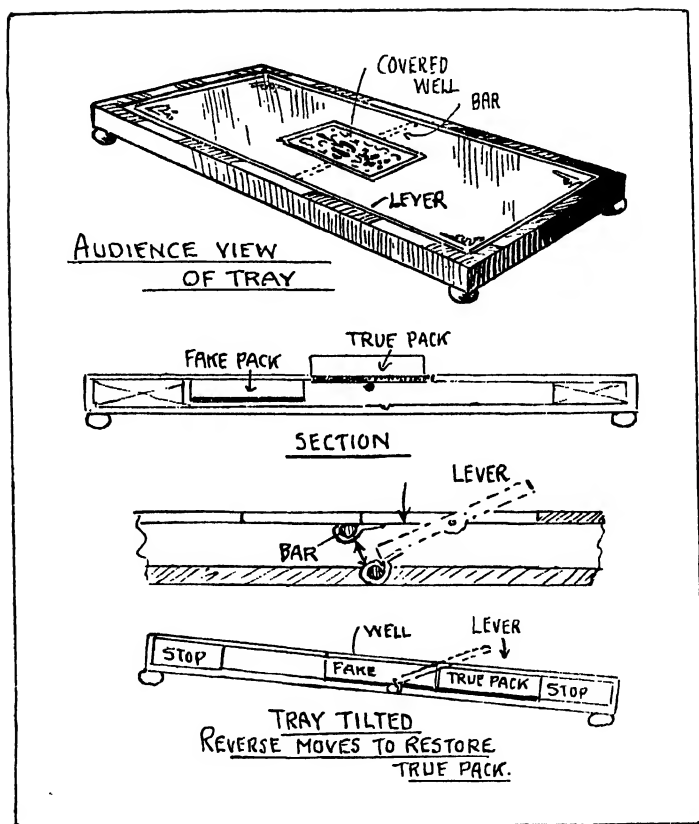
The card can be caused to vanish by the use of the trick pack described on another page. A duplicate card of the one forced is caused to appear in the frame by means of two spring blinds. When the performer first pulls down a blind he pulls on Blind A—the front one in the frame. When he pulls the blind down again he keeps the back of the frame towards the audience and pulls down Blind B which has a thin card, a duplicate of the one forced, attached to it.

A CHANGING TRAY FOR A PACK OF CARDS

A magician often finds that he can add enormously to the effect of a card trick if he can exchange the trick pack he is using for an ordinary pack, or at times he may find that he wishes to exchange an ordinary pack for a specially prepared pack. This tray will do the job neatly, quickly, and with certainty.

It will be seen that there is a sliding compartment in the tray. In one end of this compartment is the pack

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A CHANGING TRAY FOR A PACK OF CARDS.

G R E A T T R I C K S R E V E A L E D

which is to appear in place of the pack which the magician openly places on the tray. The pack is placed on the ornamented part of the tray (see illustration). By merely pressing on a small part of the side of the tray (see illustration) the performer depresses a little lever which causes the pack to sink down in the tray. Then the tray is tilted and the faked pack comes into position, and as the lever is released the faked pack rises to the top of the tray. The whole movement is the work of a second and it can be made while the performer is turning to put the tray on a side-table.

T H E I M P R O V E D R I S I N G C A R D S

I have heard magicians say that there are eighty different methods of presenting the trick known as the rising cards. If that be true then this method must be the eighty-first ; it is a very good method for stage use.

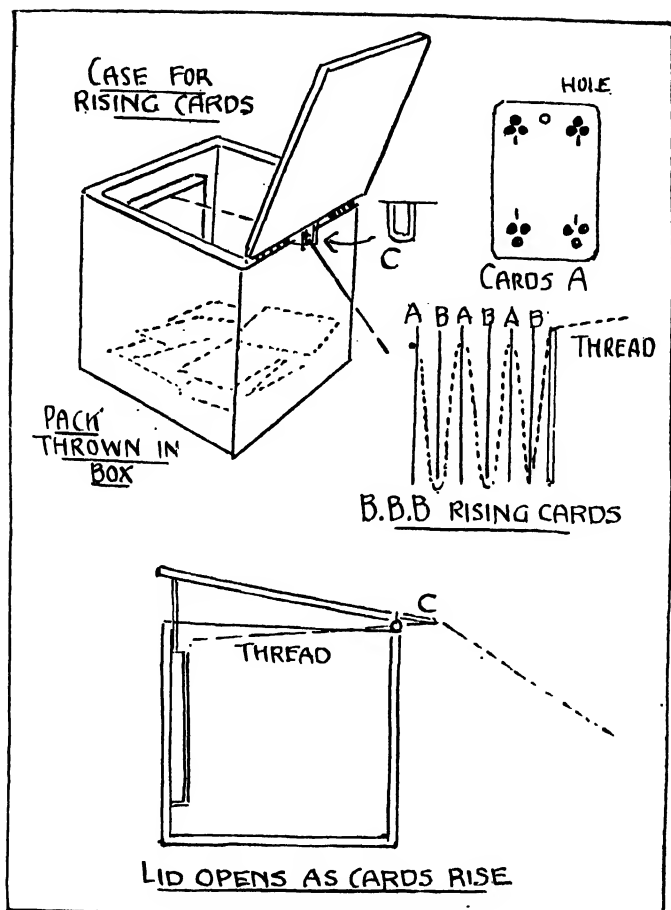
With the aid of a forcing pack the performer causes a member of the audience to take three cards similar to those which are to rise from a box on the table.

While the assistant is making a note of the three cards the performer changes his forcing pack for an ordinary pack minus the cards which have been forced. The three cards are returned to the pack and, of course, anyone can shuffle the pack to his heart's content. The performer then opens the lid of the box on his table and drops in the pack, and closes the lid.

The performer asks for a little ghostly music, and as the conductor of the orchestra kindly obliges the lid of the box slowly opens and a card is seen to rise from the box. The performer takes the card and it is identified as being one of the three chosen cards. The effect is repeated with the other two cards, the lid of the box opening each time to allow the card to be seen.

Duplicates of the three forced cards are threaded with others in the usual way. The method is clearly explained by the illustration. A small hole is made through the top of one card and the thread is passed through it. A

CARD TRICKS



THE IMPROVED RISING CARDS.

G R E A T T R I C K S R E V E A L E D

small bead is then tied to the thread to prevent it from slipping through the hole. The thread is then passed down the back of the card and under one of the cards which is to rise and the free end is passed through a hole in the top of another card. The process is repeated until the three cards have been put in their places, and the packet of cards is then placed in a little compartment in the front of the box. (See illustration.) The free end of the thread is then passed across the box and out at the back. The back of the lid projects slightly and a small staple is fitted to the centre of it ; the thread goes through this staple and, as the illustration clearly shows, a downward pull on the thread is bound to open the lid. The pull, which should be given very slowly, is continued, and the first card rises. The performer closes the box and the effect is repeated with the other two cards.

A DIFFERENT THOUGHT-READING TRICK

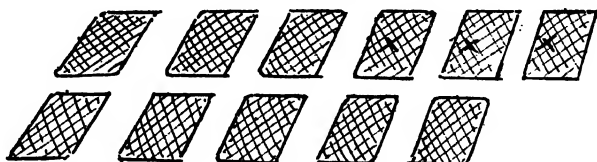
I am indebted to Murray, the famous escapologist, for the secret of this very baffling thought-reading trick with cards.

The performer hands a pack of cards to a member of his audience and asks him to assist in a little thought-reading trick. The performer, with his back to the table, asks this assistant to deal two rows of cards on the table. He may deal as many as he likes in the top row, but the number of the cards in the second row must be one less than the number of cards in the top row. The performer, of course, does not know the number of cards in either row.

The assistant is asked by the performer to remove a certain number of cards from the top row ; these cards are to be put on one side or returned to the pack. The assistant is then asked to see how many cards there are left in the top row and to remove that number of cards from the bottom row. He is then asked to count the number of cards left in the bottom row and to think of that number. The performer announces the number.

CARD TRICKS

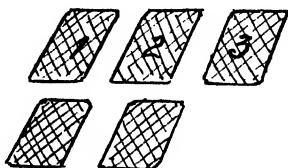
EXAMPLE



REMOVE X.X.X



REMOVE TOP ROW REMAINDER
FROM BOTTOM ROW



REMOVE TOP
ROW REMAINDER

TWO



ANSWER ALWAYS ONE
LESS THAN FIRST BID

A DIFFERENT THOUGHT-READING TRICK.

G R E A T T R I C K S R E V E A L E D

In order to make the working of the trick quite clear I had the accompanying diagrams prepared. The reader will notice that there are six cards in the top row and five in the second row. In this case the assistant was asked to remove three cards from the top row, so that three remained (of course these facts are unknown to the performer). The assistant, knowing that three cards remained in the top row, was asked to take the same number of cards from the bottom row, with the result, as shown—two cards left in the bottom row.

If the reader will think it over for a moment he will see that the answer must always be one less than the number of cards first removed from the top row.

Perhaps the best way to make that point clear is to imagine that there was an equal number of cards in both rows. We will suppose that there are twelve cards in each row, but the number, it must be remembered, is unknown to the performer. If the performer asked that two cards were to be taken from the top row there would be ten left. If the assistant, having counted these, took the same number from the bottom row, there would be two left—the number which the assistant had been directed to take from the top row. The trick, in this form, would be so simple that no one would be taken in by it, but by having the bottom row of cards one less than the first row the minds of the audience are drawn away from the simplicity of the trick. Since the bottom row has one card less than the top row the “answer” to the trick must always be one less than the number of cards first subtracted from the top row.

Although the secret of the trick is simplicity itself to those who know it, the effect produced with any ordinary audience is bewildering.

T H E E G G A N D T H E C A R D

Having had a card selected by a member of the audience and handed to him, the performer points to an egg in an egg-cup on his table and asks: “Do you think

CARD TRICKS

it would be possible for me to put that card in that egg? You will know, of course, that an egg is full up, as a rule."

We will suppose that someone says: "No—that would be impossible."

"I quite agree with you," says the performer. "I am not going to try to do the impossible—not going to try to put the card in the egg. All I do is to put the egg on the card. There is all the difference in the world between those two little words—'in' and 'on'."

The performer places the egg on the card and makes a few passes over it.

"That," says the performer, "causes the egg to come under the influence of the card. You can see that the expression of the egg has now completely changed. No? The egg is now thinking of the card—thinking very hard too. I'll prove it."

The performer removes the shell from the egg—a hard-boiled one—and holds it up, and the audience see the name of the card written on the white of the egg.

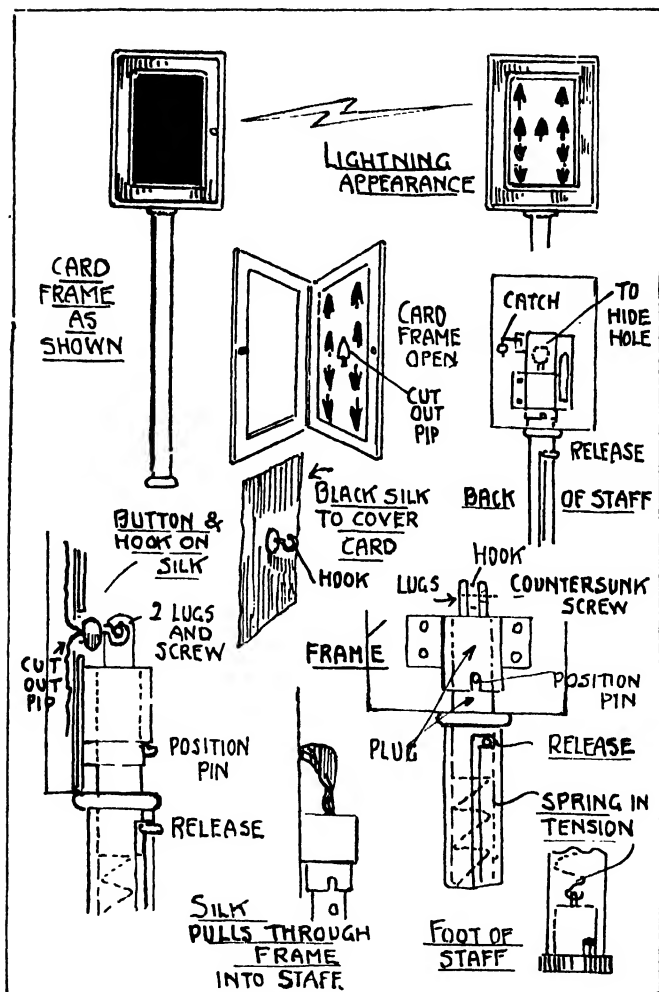
The card is forced and the egg is prepared for the trick in this way. One ounce of alum is dissolved in a quarter of a pint of vinegar, and the job must be done thoroughly; the alum must be dissolved. The performer, using a small camel's hair brush, paints the name of the card on the egg, which, by the way, should be a new-laid one. The egg must then be left until it is thoroughly dry; it is then boiled for ten minutes. When the shell is removed the name of the card will be seen on the white of the egg.

I am indebted to my old friend, Mr. G. W. Hunter, for the secret of this capital little trick.

A NEW CARD FRAME

This frame is designed for the magical appearance of one card—the nine of spades. The centre pip is cut out. It will be seen that there is a hole in the centre of the frame. The frame opens in book fashion and one side of it is black. The frame is opened, the card inserted and a piece of black silk covers the card. The silk has a

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



A NEW CARD FRAME.

C A R D T R I C K S

button and hook sewn to it and the hook is passed through the card and through the hole in the frame. The other side of the frame is then closed and the frame appears to be empty. Obviously, the only thing to do to cause the appearance of the card is to draw away the silk quickly, and this is done by means of a spring pull in the staff on which the frame is fixed.

CHAPTER IX

INDIAN AND EGYPTIAN MAGIC

INDIAN MAGIC

It is a popular superstition in England that Indian magic is more wonderful than that of any other country. The superstition began in the early days of the East India Company. In those days magic was little practised, and as little understood in England. In India, however, it was largely practised and, within limits, well understood, and the officers of the Company were greatly impressed by the performances they saw. When they returned home, their tales of these performances lost nothing in the telling. Travellers' tales seldom do. Thus began the superstition, and it has thrived ever since.

I say unhesitatingly that Western Magic (by which I mean the magic of the United States, England and Europe generally) is far superior to Indian Magic. But I freely admit that there is much to be said for the latter. It is a plant of long growth. Centuries ago, Indian magicians gathered audiences about them and performed good tricks skilfully. There has not, however, been progress. Westerners have advanced rapidly; but the magicians of India have not. Once they were in front of us. Now they toil painfully in our wake.

“What of the Mango Trick, and what of the Basket Trick?”

First I would refer to certain natural advantages for the practice of the art possessed by the natives of India. Speaking generally, they have a greater sensibility of touch and flexibility of limb than we Westerners. This, of course, makes for speed and fineness of work. Then

INDIAN AND EGYPTIAN MAGIC

again, and still speaking generally, they have a mental tendency towards the mystic and a taste for the bizarre. For these and other reasons one would expect them to produce some very notable magicians. Perhaps these will appear some day. If they do, I venture to prophesy that their magic will be largely based on Western Magic.

I have already mentioned the Mango Trick and the Basket Trick. More famous even than these is the Indian Rope Trick. Many accounts of this have been published, and they have been of a nature to strengthen the superstition to which we referred at the beginning of this article. But who of us magicians has actually seen the trick performed with all the circumstance and wonderful effect of the usual printed version? Not one. I have talked with a number of magicians who have toured India. They all described the Indian Rope Trick as a sort of will-o'-the-wisp. You hear of it everywhere; but you never "rope it in". Besides, if it were a genuine practical effect, its exponents would bring it to this country and, with its aid, earn more rupees in a day here than they can make in a year at home.

The late Charles Bertram knew India very well, and wrote of it with authority, from the magical point of view. In one article he explained a certain apparent facility of performance in Indian magicians. They travel, he said, in little groups of four or five, and each, as a rule, does his own trick. This allows one man to prepare his apparatus without observation, while another one is going through his performance, so that seemingly these people do their tricks without any previous preparation. Again, they carry about with them a lot of bags, bits of old cloth, and blankets, which, although the uninitiated public does not know it, are of the greatest service to them in getting rid of things which have served their purpose.

EGYPTIAN MAGIC

Ancient Egypt was famed for its dexterous magicians, and the country in the present day still boasts of possess-

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ing personages of that mysterious character. The existing magicians of Egypt, who are most commonly of Arab descent, display their art almost always by what is called "the experiment of the magic mirror of ink". This is performed in the following way. Being in the presence of those who are to witness the exhibition of his powers, the magician prepares for his task by certain forms of invocation, which consist usually in writing down on a slip of paper a string of charmed words. These words are translated by Oriental scholars as "Tur'shoon! Tury-oo'shoon? Come down! Come down! Be present! Whither are gone the prince and his troops? Where are Ahh'mar, the prince, and his troops? Be present, ye servants of these names. And this is the removal. And we have removed from thee thy veil; and thy sight to-day is piercing." These last words are intended to open, in a supernatural manner, the eyes of the boy on whom the working of the charm mainly depends. For after the preliminary invocations are gone through, the magician announces himself ready to begin his display, and desires a boy to be brought to him. Those before whom the magician is exhibiting his art commonly hire any boy whom they find accidentally upon the streets, in order to prevent, if possible, the chance of collusion. When the boy arrives, the magician takes his right hand, and draws in the palm of it a magic diagram, in the form of a square. A little ink is then poured into the hollow of the same hand, and this ink forms the "magic mirror", into which the boy looks intently in the course of the exhibition, and sees all the figures and scenes which it is the wish of the magician or his audience to call up. A chafing-dish stands all the while at the magician's hand, and into this he throws at times the beforementioned charm cut into slips. Perfumes are at the same time burnt in the chafing-dish, and their smoke fills the room, circling around the performers and spectators, and satiating their nostrils with the odours of frankincense and coriander.

When all is thus prepared, the enchanter begins to question the boy. "Do you see anything?" If the

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charm works well, the boy usually appears frightened, and replies that he sees "a man sweeping the ground". This answer we believe is at least a common one, if not uniformly given. The magician then desires the boy to call for various flags in succession, and the boy calls for and sees seven flags of various colours. He then calls for "the sultan", who is the party that is to show all the future objects in the mirror. If the sultan comes, the charm is wound up. The magician meanwhile mutters incessantly in the intervals, and keeps throwing the fragments of the written charm into the chafing-dish. After a time, if all has gone to his mind, the magician turns to the spectators and announces that any person whom they may select, living or dead, will be called up in the magic mirror, beheld and described by the boy.

Lord Prudhoe, an English nobleman of the Percy family, and Major Felix, British officer, were among the first persons who astonished the European world with their report of the magic mirror experiment. The experiment such as we have described it, was performed before two gentlemen when travelling in Egypt, and they were desired to call up either the absent or the dead. They asked for Shakespeare, Voltaire, and others, and received descriptions of them from the lips of the boy, exactly corresponding with their portraits, as regarded dress, figure and countenance. They then tested the boy with lesser-known living persons. Major Felix, for instance, called for a description of his own brother, an officer in the army, and then in India. The boy described a red-coated Frank, whom he saw standing by the seashore, with a horse and a black servant behind him. Finally, the lad exclaimed, "Oh, this is a strange Frank, he has only one arm!" When Major Felix heard these words, which accurately painted the condition of his brother, his feelings of awe and excitement so much overpowered him that he nearly fainted away.

Lord Prudhoe and Major Felix were not the only persons thus impressed by the magicians of Egypt. Mr. Salt, a former British consul, a man intimately acquainted

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with the language, people and country, and less liable to be deceived than a passing traveller, found himself completely puzzled on many occasions by the results of the magic mirror experiment. Having once, for example, private reasons for believing that some of his servants had stolen various articles of property, Mr. Salt sent for a celebrated Mugh'reb'ee magician, with a view to intimidating the suspected person, and causing him voluntarily to confess if he were really guilty. The magician came, and at once declared that he would cause the exact image of the guilty person to appear to any boy not above the age of puberty. A boy was taken casually from a band of several then at work in Mr. Salt's garden, the forms were then gone through and the magic mirror properly formed.

After seeing various images, the boy finally described from the mirror the guilty person—stature, dress and countenance ; said that he knew him, and ran down into the garden, where he apprehended one of the labourers, who, when brought before his master, immediately confessed that he was the thief.

But there is another side to the question.

In some instances the boys can see nothing ; in others when they do profess to see something their answers to questions have not a shadow of correctness ; in others their answers are imperfect ; here right and there wrong.

If figures be undeniably visible in the inky mirror, as some observers seem to think, and as the uniform vision of the "sweeping" and the "flags" would seem to confirm, why should the experiment ever fail? May not the whole be explained on the supposition that the boys themselves have a partial knowledge of the forms of the art and that when placed in such situations as here described, a dread of the sorcerer's power, and perhaps excited imagination, may lead them to bend to its influence, and answer his leading questions as he seems to wish? Doubtless the subject of magic, its rites and incantations, will be discussed in most families, and the dread

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of sorcerers instilled into the ears of children from their cradle. Some, indeed, may not hear of such things ; and may not these be the boys who can see nothing in the mirror of ink ?

CHAPTER X

MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC

CATCHING LIVE PIGEONS IN THE AIR

THE performer comes on with a large butterfly-net in his hand. He waves the net in the air a few times and then reaches out and catches a live pigeon which he takes from the net and puts in a basket previously shown to be empty. He continues the performance until he has caught two pigeons, and to prove that they are the genuine article they kindly fly from the basket.

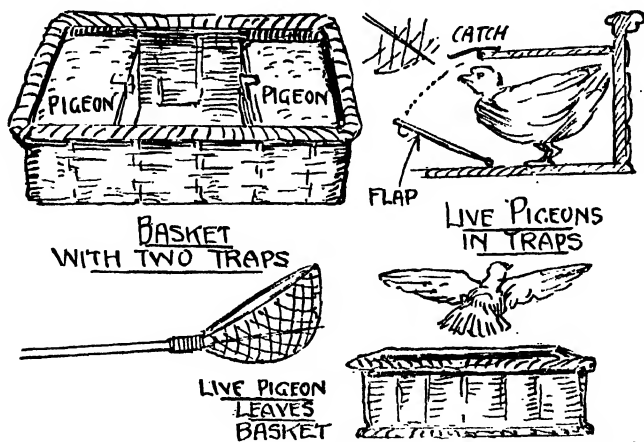
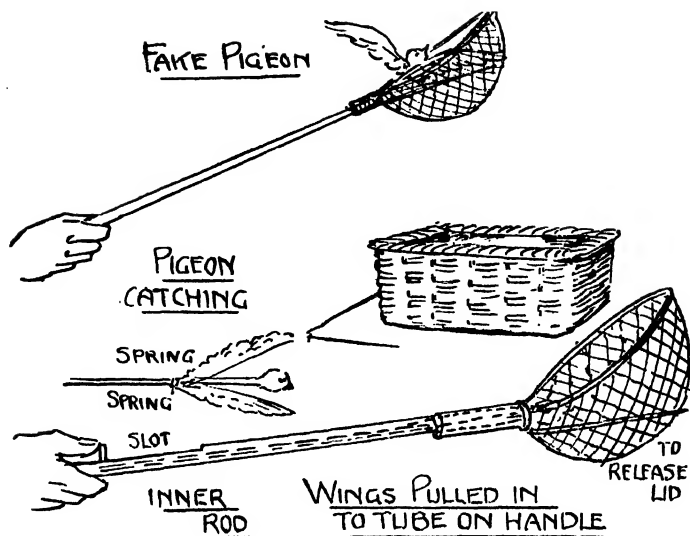
The main secret is in the net, the construction of which is shown in the accompanying diagrams. It will be seen that the pigeon in the net is really a well-made dummy, formed of a head and a pair of wings on a spring. The dummy closes up into a small space and is concealed in the handle. The performer causes the appearance of the dummy at the right moment by pushing on a rod which runs inside the handle of the net.

The basket can be shown empty in the first place by turning it upside down for a moment. The pigeons are concealed in two traps in the basket and these are closed with two small catches which the performer, or his assistant, can easily release at the end of the trick. The illusion, on a large stage, is perfect.

THE RIBBON TUBE

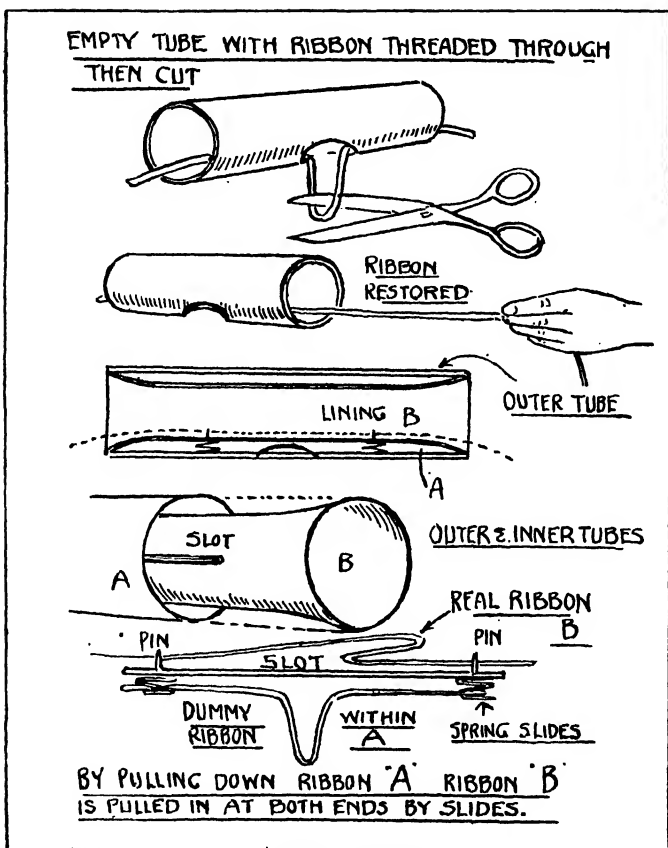
This, to my mind, is one of the "plums" of the book; the effect is perfect, and the means by which it is brought about are very ingenious. I think the average magician would not get anywhere near the secret if he guessed for a year.

MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC



CATCHING LIVE PIGEONS IN THE AIR.

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THE RIBBON TUBE.

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The performer shows a small metal tube with a hole in the centre. He passes a piece of ribbon through the tube and lets the ends hang down. Now note what follows.

With a pair of scissors the performer reaches into the hole in the centre of the tube and drags out a small loop of the ribbon, and as he does this the audience see the ends of the ribbon being drawn inwards.

The performer then cuts right through the loop and the audience see that the cut is perfectly fair ; the two ends are seen hanging down out of the hole. Putting the scissors on the table the performer calls attention to what he has done. Then, very slowly, he pulls first one end of the ribbon and then the other. (These ends are those hanging down outside the ends of the tube.) While he is doing this the audience sees the two ends hanging out of the hole slowly disappear ; they appear to be drawn inside the tube, although they are separate. Then comes the great climax to the trick. The performer takes the ribbon right out of the tube and gives it for examination ; it is an ordinary piece of ribbon.

The secret is, of course, in the tube, and I advise the reader to study the diagrams before he reads the explanation. Then he will see how the trick is worked.

There is a second tube fitting closely at the ends of the tube, but there is a space between the two in the middle. There is a slot in the inner tube and sticking up through the slot are two pins ; the pins are attached to a short piece of ribbon.

When the performer puts the ribbon in the tube he engages it in these two pins. In putting the scissors into the hole and drawing down a loop of the ribbon fitted to the pins the performer really draws the visible ribbon into the tube. It is this action which makes the trick so puzzling to the keenest spectator, who is absolutely convinced that the loop of ribbon coming out of the hole of the tube must be a loop of the ribbon which the performer dropped through the tube.

After the performer has cut through the loop he goes

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to the two ends of the tube and pulls, first one end and then the other. This action draws the cut loop into the tube, because the long piece of ribbon is still engaged on the two pins and, it will be remembered, these pins are attached to the cut loop. When the cut loop has disappeared into the tube the performer merely has to take the ribbon off the pins and pull it through the tube.

It has been often said that there is a weak point in every trick, but there does not appear to be one in this trick. I know of no more convincing "cut and restored" trick with a short piece of ribbon, and yet the working is so simple and easy that, with a little care, the trick cannot possibly fail.

THE NOTE AND THE BALLOON

I am indebted to my friend, Horace Goldin, for this very effective trick.

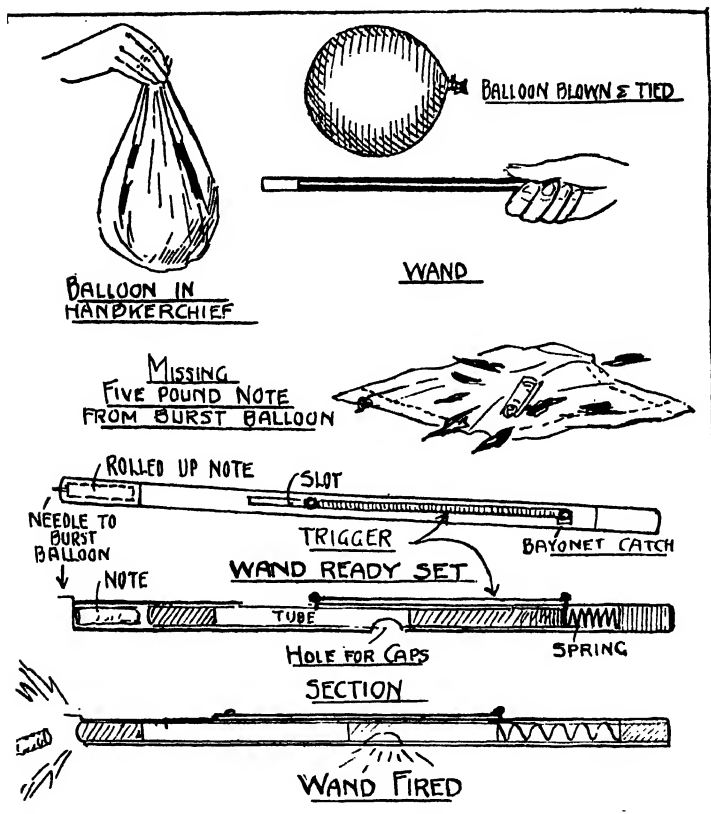
A tray of toy balloons—not blown out—is handed to a member of the audience who is asked to select one. The performer takes the balloon, blows it out, and ties it. The balloon is then placed on a large handkerchief. Gathering the four corners of the handkerchief together the performer gives them to a member of the audience. Portions of the balloon are visible.

The next thing to do is to borrow a five-pound note and ask the owner to make a note of the number. (The trick can be performed equally well with a pound note, but it looks well to borrow a fiver.)

The performer rolls up the note and causes it to vanish, either by sleight of hand or some other method; a double handkerchief with one corner open provides a very easy method. The performer picks up his wand and points towards the balloon. There is a sudden report, and the balloon bursts. The assistant lays the handkerchief on the table, and from the fragments of the balloon picks out the borrowed note; the owner of the note identifies it as his property.

The trick is mainly in the wand. If the performer is

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THE NOTE AND THE BALLOON.

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going to use a double handkerchief for the vanish he must provide himself with a five-pound note and roll it up; he then switches the borrowed note for his own. In any case, whatever vanish is used, the performer must retain the borrowed note in his hand; he secretly works it into the end of his wand.

Details of the wand, which is one that fires a cap, are given in the illustrations; the end of the wand in which the note is hidden has a needle-point fitted to it.

Having caused the note to vanish the performer picks up his wand and points to the balloon; he gets a little nearer and then fires his wand, at the same time touching the balloon with the needle-point. The action of the wand pushes out the note and the trick is done.

T H E B E S T O F A L L B A N K - N O T E T R I C K S

Many magicians have heard of this trick, but few have seen it. It was a favourite trick of some of the most brilliant magicians of days gone by, but it is seldom performed nowadays for the simple reason, I imagine, that the complete secret is not known. I propose to explain it thoroughly.

The effect is straightforward and, to anyone who thinks, or tries to think, of an explanation, very bewildering.

The performer borrows a bank-note, reads out the number, folds up the note, and burns it. If he wishes, he can cause the magical disappearance of the note in some other way; this is only the preliminary part of the trick.

The performer then picks up a lemon from his table. He cuts open the lemon and takes from it an egg. He breaks the egg into a glass and, along with the usual contents of an uncooked egg, there falls from it a small walnut. The performer wipes the nut, opens it, and takes out a note which is identified as the one which magically disappeared at the beginning of the trick.

The magician who hears of this trick for the first time naturally asks: "How do you get a walnut into an

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uncooked egg without spoiling the appearance of the egg?" I will answer that question when I have disposed of some other details.

The magician knows the number of the note which is in the walnut and when he has borrowed a note he pretends to read out the number, but really repeats the number of his own note. He then rolls up the note he has borrowed, changes it in his hand for a dummy and burns the dummy. He then finishes the trick in the way described.

A simpler and easier method of getting rid of the borrowed note would be that afforded by a double handkerchief with a small slit in the centre; there are, of course, many other ways of causing a bank-note to vanish magically. A changing card box answers the purpose very well.

The lemon is prepared by cutting off the top very neatly, scooping out most of the contents and then pushing in the egg. The top of the lemon is then fastened on with a little Seccotine.

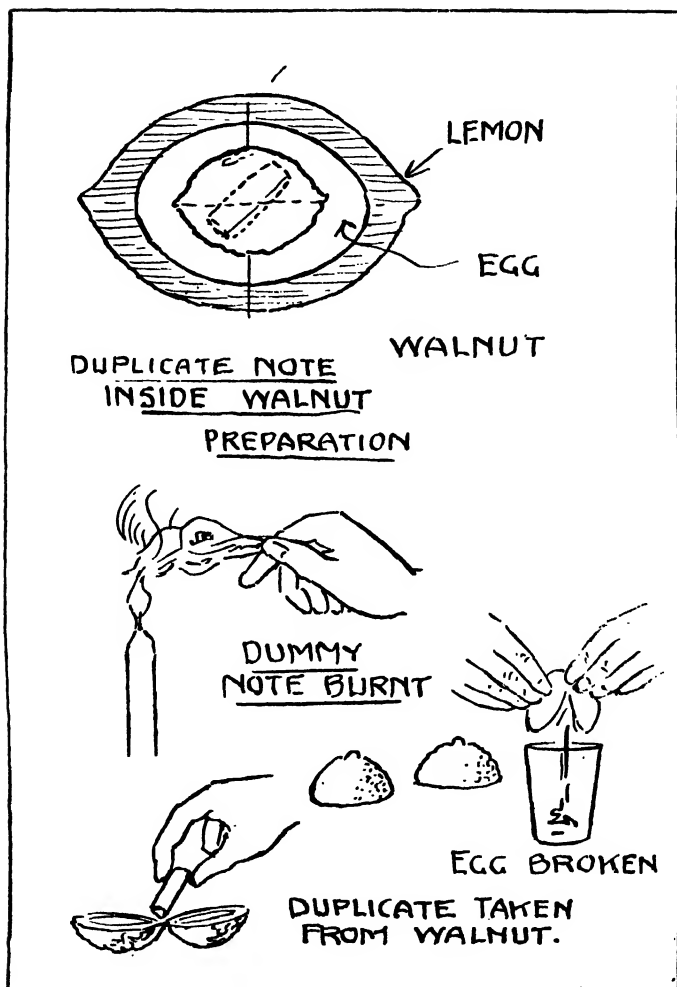
For the preparation of the egg the performer uses two eggs. One is boiled hard and, when it is cold, the top is taken off with a clean cut; an old razor is a good instrument to use for the job. The performer then scoops out some of the contents of the large piece of the egg, but takes care to leave a rim round the top; if this is not done there will be great difficulty in getting the top of the egg fixed properly.

Having taken out most of the white and all the yolk of the egg the performer drops in the nut and then fills up the egg by breaking the other egg into it. He then fastens on the top of the egg with Seccotine.

The nut, of course, is easily prepared; it is first opened with a knife. The contents are cut out, the rolled-up note put inside, and then the two halves of the shell are fastened with Seccotine.

When the performer is going to break the egg into the glass he takes good care to let the audience see that he has nothing but the egg in his hands, and he also holds

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THE BEST OF ALL BANK-NOTE TRICKS.

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the egg in such a way that the audience see the nut fall from it.

Now that I have explained the working of this fine old trick, I shall hope to hear that many magicians have decided to include it in their programmes. It is a good trick for any audience and, as readers will note, it can be performed at the closest quarters.

SILENT THOUGHT-READING

Any magician who wishes to present a good thought-reading act with a lady as his assistant will do well to study the routine which I am about to explain. The various effects are very puzzling to any audience and yet they are brought about by very simple means and the whole act can be learned in half an hour. I do not say, of course, that the magician and his assistant will be able to present it with good effect after studying the various secrets for half an hour, but they will certainly understand, in that time, what they are to do and how they are to do it. The rest—the exact time to be occupied in getting the act into good working order—must depend on the performer and his assistant, but I imagine that half a dozen rehearsals of an hour or so will be sufficient, as a rule.

Before introducing his assistant to the audience the performer explains what they are going to do. He says that the lady can read his thoughts immediately, and in proof of this he has a blackboard and chalk with which he proposes to carry out some experiments. He also has a pack of cards. Perhaps someone would like to shuffle the cards. To prove that the lady does not see what is going on and therefore cannot discover what is happening by any normal means, the performer says he will blindfold the lady. He picks up a black bandage from the table and holds it over the eyes of a member of the audience who agrees that it is impossible to see anything when the bandage is over the eyes.

"The experiments," continues the performer, "will be

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carried out in silence, so far as I am concerned, and as the lady will not be able to see you will agree that it will be impossible for me to signal to her in any way. I shall be glad if someone from the audience will come on the stage and write a simple addition sum on the blackboard. Thank you, sir. Here is the medium. I will blindfold her, and if she sits at the back of the stage she will be in view of the audience all the time and will not be able to hear the slightest whisper from me. Now, sir, will you write down any addition sum you like, but do not add it up."

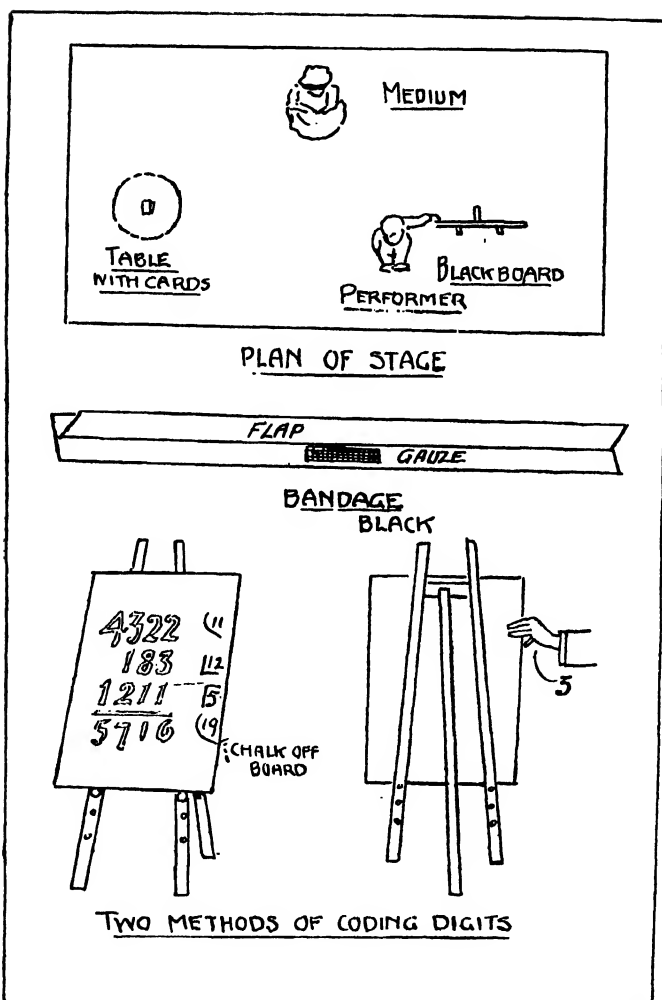
The sum is written down by a member of the audience, and the performer draws a line under the figures. He has hardly completed the line before the lady says: "Write down 6." The performer does so. The lady goes on to tell the performer that he is to write the figures 1, 7, 5; she does this slowly, and when she has finished the performer signs to the man who wrote the figures, asking him by signs if the addition is correct. It is.

The performer then points to various figures at random and the lady immediately calls out the figure to which the performer is pointing; if he should point to a blank space on the board the lady says: "There is no figure there." Occasionally the performer varies the effect by running the chalk through two figures. The lady immediately says: "Those two figures added together come to——" (The statement is correct.)

To make the test still more convincing the performer adds the figures in each row together and puts the total at the side. The lady gives each total immediately. Then the performer signs to someone in the audience to come on the stage and write down one or two figures. Directly a figure is written down the medium says: "You've written——" (naming the figure).

Finally, the performer picks up the pack of cards and draws off one and looks at it intently. The medium announces the card. The feat is repeated with three or four cards, and the experiments are brought to an end.

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SILENT THOUGHT-READING.

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And now for the simple explanation.

The bandage is a trick one. It is made of several thicknesses of thin black material sewn together down the middle. Cut a wide hole through all thicknesses of the material except the top and bottom ; the hole is then not seen. When the performer holds the bandage over the eyes of a member of the audience he takes care to see that the portion which is not cut goes over the person's eyes. In blindfolding the lady he puts the cut-out portion over her eyes, and, of course, she can see all that is going on.

The performer stands beside the blackboard and puts his hand on the side of it in a natural position. He signals—say, the figure 3—by putting three of his fingers behind the blackboard, the other finger being curled inwards. The lady merely looks at the fingers ; of course, the performer does the addition of each row quickly, but, if the best effect is to be produced, the lady must not be very quick. She should say : “ I see a—one moment—yes, the figure is 6, etc. etc.”

To signal a figure over 5 the performer first steadies the blackboard by putting his hand under it for a second ; this means 5 and something to be added ; the figure to be added is signalled with the fingers as before.

The second part of the experiment, in which the performer points to figures, is also very simple, for the performer and his medium have arranged this beforehand. The performer points to—say, eight figures in the order known to the medium. This part of the experiment should be carried out quickly. The figures can be repeated with the additions I have mentioned, the performer striking out two figures already known to the medium at certain intervals and pointing to a blank space after pointing to—say, twelve figures. All this can be learned by heart beforehand.

To signal the total of the figures in a row the performer signals first the unit and then the next figure by the way he writes the bracket—one stroke (heard by the lady) meaning 1, two strokes—a square bracket—meaning two.

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Three is signalled by running the chalk right off the board, a move that the lady can hear. Should it be necessary to signal 0 the performer holds the top of the board for a second. In announcing the totals the lady gives the complete figure—eleven, or whatever it may be.

When a member of the audience writes figures on the blackboard the performer stands on one side with his left hand on his hip and signals in the same way in that position ; should the figure be more than five the hand is lowered.

The last experiment—with cards—is very simple. It will be remembered that the performer led off by showing the cards. After the pack was shuffled the performer picked up the bandage. Under the bandage were half a dozen cards all known to the medium. In picking up the bandage the performer dropped the pack face upwards over the cards which had been hidden. The rest is easy.

A good showman should be able to produce a splendid effect with this routine. The medium should not work too quickly, especially when she is announcing the figures of the additions and the names of the cards. The best way to convince the audience that the feat is one of genuine thought-reading is to think of the way it might be presented if the medium really could read the performer's thoughts.

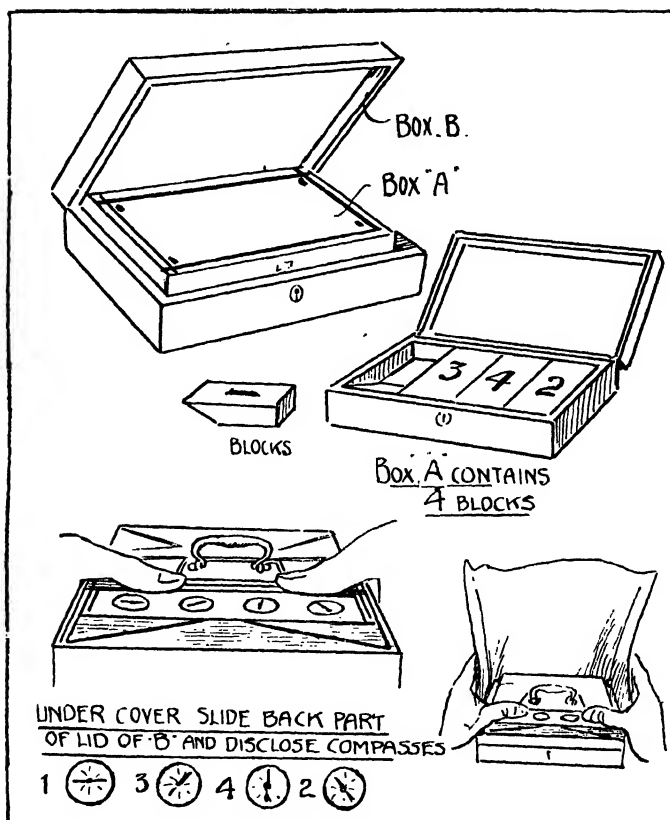
THOUGHT-READING WITH NUMBERS

The numbers are the figures, 1, 2, 3, 4, and they are printed on four little blocks of wood which fit exactly into a small box. The box and the numbers can be examined by anyone.

Someone is asked to put the blocks into the box in any way he pleases and to remember the order, counting from the left.

The performer then shows a larger box with a handle ; this box can also be examined. The little box containing the blocks is placed in the larger one, and in order that the box may be completely hidden the performer wraps it

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THOUGHT-READING WITH NUMBERS.

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in a sheet of paper. The spectator is asked to think of the way in which he arranged the blocks in the box, and the performer at once tells him the order of the blocks. Anyone may undo the parcel and take the smaller box from the larger one, open it, and look at the blocks.

The trick is easy. When the performer is wrapping the box in a sheet of paper he holds the paper up in front of the box for a second. (See illustration.) With his thumbs the performer slides away the top of the box and so gets a view of four little compasses. The blocks are faked in such a way that the hands of the compasses tell the performer at once the order of the blocks. (See illustration.) It is a simple matter to slide the top of the box back into place and finish the trick in a very convincing way.

A MESSAGE READ IN A CRYSTAL

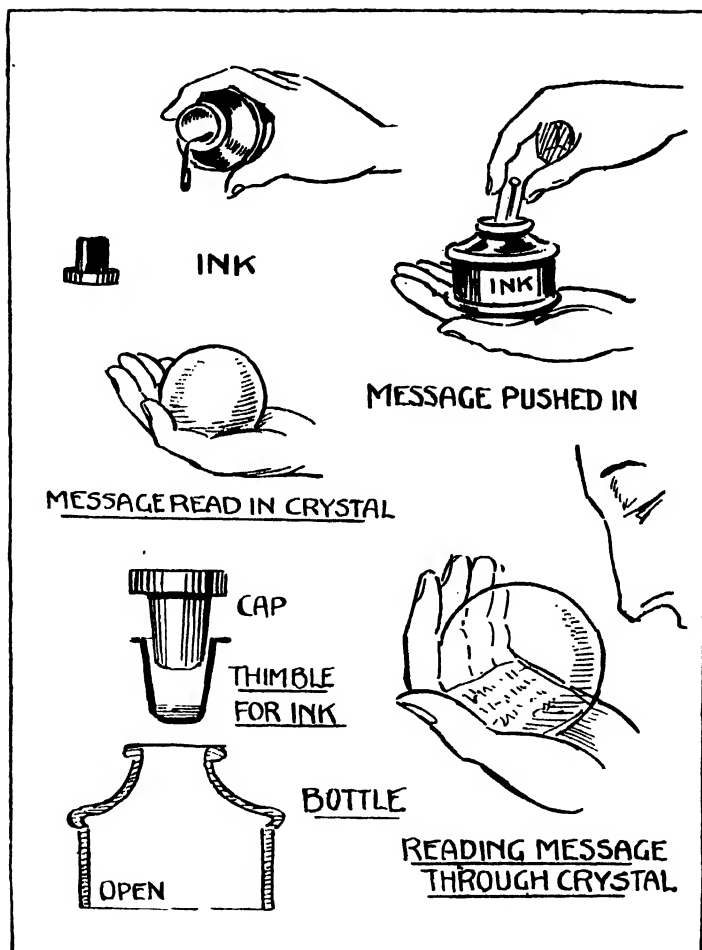
The performer shows a small bottle of ink and pours a few drops on to a piece of blotting-paper, to show that the ink is genuine. He then puts the cork into the bottle and asks someone to write a message on a small slip of paper and to roll up the paper so that the writing is completely hidden.

Having removed the cork from the ink bottle the performer takes the message and places it in the bottle. He then picks up his crystal and slowly reads out the message by merely gazing into the crystal.

The various moves necessary for the performance of the trick have been faithfully recorded, but there are others which the audience do not notice.

The bottle is black ; a small thimble fits into the top of the bottle. A little ink is placed in the thimble. The cork fits closely into the thimble, and therefore when the performer removes the cork in order that he may insert the message into the bottle he secretly takes the thimble away with it. Inside the bottle is a small tube running down to the base ; therefore the message is really dropped into the performer's hand. In picking up the crystal

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A MESSAGE READ IN A CRYSTAL.

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with the right hand the performer secretly unrolls the message and then places the crystal right over it.

Enough said ! Of course a clever performer does not read out the message quickly, but seems to puzzle it out, word by word ; he may even make one or two mistakes—and then correct them. An excellent effect and quite easy.

Cecil Lyle's Ink Bottle may be used for this effect.

THE WILL GOLDSTON THOUGHT-READING APPARATUS

Performers who are fond of presenting thought-reading experiments are often in trouble when they come to the weak point in such experiments—the moment when the messages or questions written by members of the audience have to be exchanged for those known to the performer. The experienced performer knows quite well that it is at that very moment that the eyes of the audience are upon him and that a false move will give the trick away.

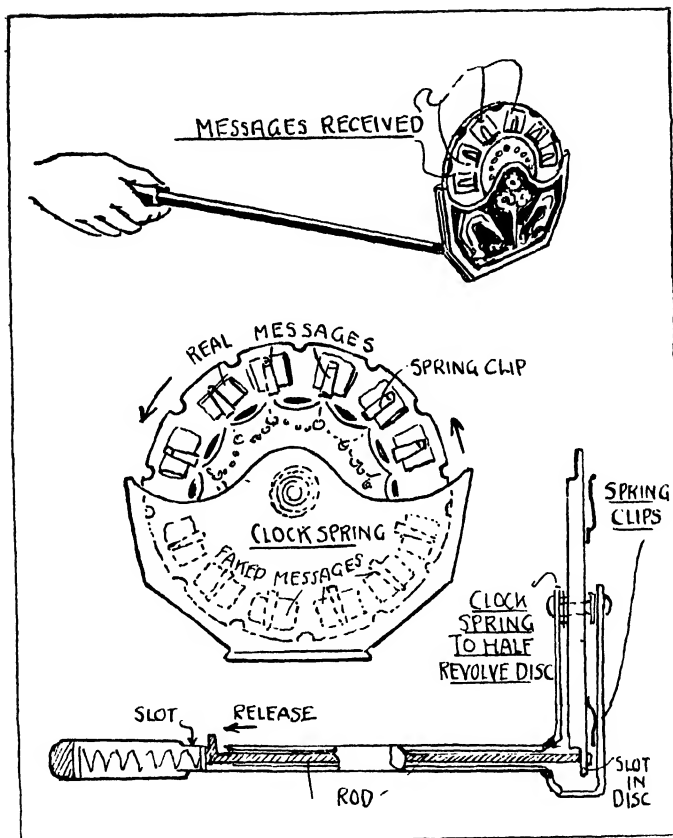
It was with the idea of helping thought-readers that I invented the little piece of apparatus here illustrated ; the artist shows the appearance of the thing and also its working.

The performer advances to his audience with half a dozen slips of paper in his hands. Spectators are asked to write any messages they please on the papers and to put the papers in the clips provided for them. The performer points out that he purposely had a long handle fixed to the holder so that everyone could see that he did not touch a single message himself.

When all the messages have been written and placed in the holder the performer turns to a spectator and asks him to take out any message he pleases. In that turn the exchange is made ; all six messages written by members of the audience disappear in a flash and their places are taken by messages known to the performer ; yet the appearance of the holder has not changed ; no one can guess that, so far as the performer is concerned, the most important part of his thought-reading experiment is over.

It will be seen that the holder is really a wheel, or

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THE WILL GOLDSTON THOUGHT-READING APPARATUS.

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clock, the upper half only being visible to the audience. The messages of the audience are put into the clips provided for them, and as the performer turns to a spectator to ask that one message may be selected the performer releases a catch in the handle, and the half of the wheel, which has a spring fitted to it, disappears, and the lower half, with the performer's own messages in it, appears in its place.

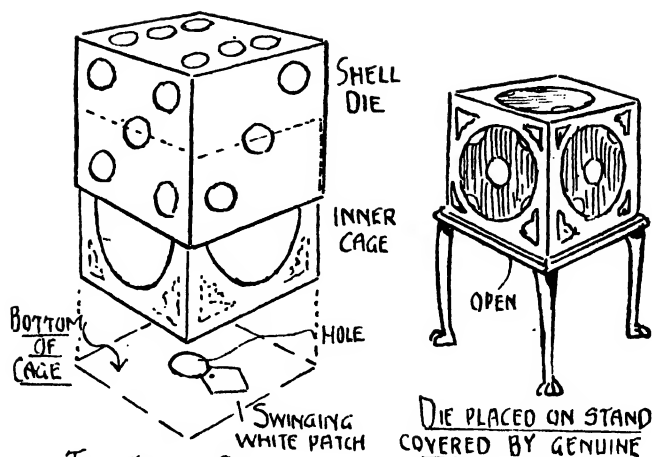
NORMAN'S IMPROVED DIE TRICK

There are many die tricks—good, bad, and indifferent, a few very good. But to my mind this is the best of all, and that is why I include an explanation of it in this book. There does not seem to be a weak point in the trick, and the effect is baffling even to an expert ; yet the working is perfectly simple and the performer does not have to depend on the use of any special table, or any *servante* ; the trick is entirely self-contained.

The performer leads off by showing a large die to his audience. All six sides of the die are freely shown. The performer places the die on a little four-legged stand. There is a small hole in the centre of the base of the stand. The performer then drops a large cover—or, to use the inventor's description, "cage"—over the die. The cage is little more than an ornamental frame-work and the audience see all four sides of the die. The die, covered by the cage, now appears exactly as the artist has drawn it. An oblong cover is now placed over the cage for a moment ; when the performer lifts it the audience see the cage still there on the stand, but the die has vanished. The performer drops his wand right through the cage and through the base of the stand and he can also show that the oblong cover is empty. Could you have a cleaner vanish for a die ?

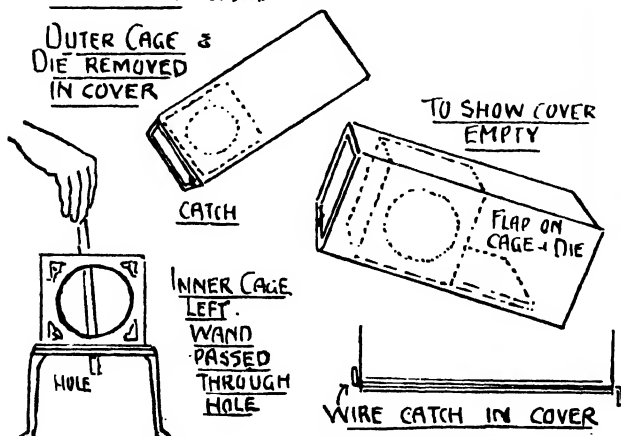
Now for the details, and I advise the reader to keep one eye on the illustrations while he is reading. The die is not as solid as it appears to be. The outer part is a shell which fits over a "cage" exactly similar to the one

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



THE TRICK DIE
CAN BE SHOWN ALL ROUND

OUTER CAGE & DIE REMOVED IN COVER



NORMAN'S IMPROVED DIE TRICK.

MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC

which the performer is going to drop over the die. The outer side of the base of the cage is painted to resemble the one-point side of the die, but the one spot is really a hole covered with a white patch of tin which can be pushed on one side at the right time. (See illustration.)

After the die has been shown, placed on the stand, and covered with the cage, the performer puts the oblong cover over the cage. When lifting the cover the performer pinches the sides and so brings away the cage with the die inside it. The audience see the inner cage and believe that it is the one which covered the die.

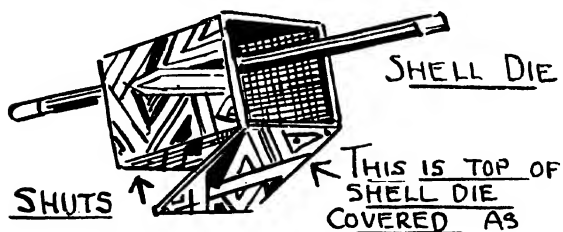
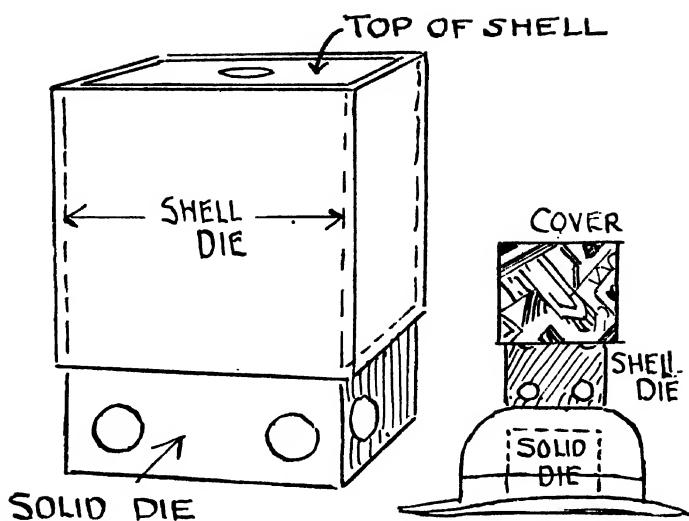
How does the performer show the cover empty? The top of the cage which covered the die and the top of the die are both hinged. By merely tilting the cover the performer causes the top of the cage and the top of the die to lie flat against one side of the cover. In order that there shall not be any chance of the cage and shell die slipping out of the cover there is a little wire catch at the bottom of the cover. After the performer has turned the catch inwards he can handle the cover carelessly, without the slightest fear of giving the trick away.

This trick, to my mind, is real magic, and I am confident that any magician who decides to include it in his programme will find that he has a "winner". The great problem—the escape of the die from the cage—is not likely to be solved by any member of any ordinary audience, and I doubt very much if one magician in twenty would "get wise" after seeing the trick performed once.

THE DIE AND THE HAT

Every schoolboy who has had a box of tricks given to him knows the good old trick of the die and the hat. The die has a "shell" over it and at a convenient moment the die is allowed to slip out of the shell into the hat. The audience see the shell in the performer's hand and think it is the solid die. Then the young magician puts a cover over the shell and in lifting up the cover he can

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



THE DIE AND THE HAT.

MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC

show that the die has vanished, for the shell fits into the cover.

If the young magician wishes to vary the trick slightly he can cover the die (with the shell over it) with the hat. Then he suggests that perhaps the audience will get a better view of the trick if he puts the die on the top of the hat ; of course, he really takes off the shell and it is the shell which the audience see on the hat. The cover goes over the shell, and when the cover is lifted the shell is inside it. And, what is more, most of the audience know that the shell is there !

Here is a great improvement on this good old trick—an improvement which will make the trick puzzling to those who know the original form of the trick. In this case the top of the shell is hinged, and the under side of the top matches the cover. (Read slowly, and then look at the illustration, and you will get the idea in a moment.) When the performer lifts the cover with the shell inside it he holds both between his hands and, waving his hands, he pushes open the top of the shell and holds it against the top side of the cover ; as it matches the other three sides the shell has really vanished. A very neat idea.

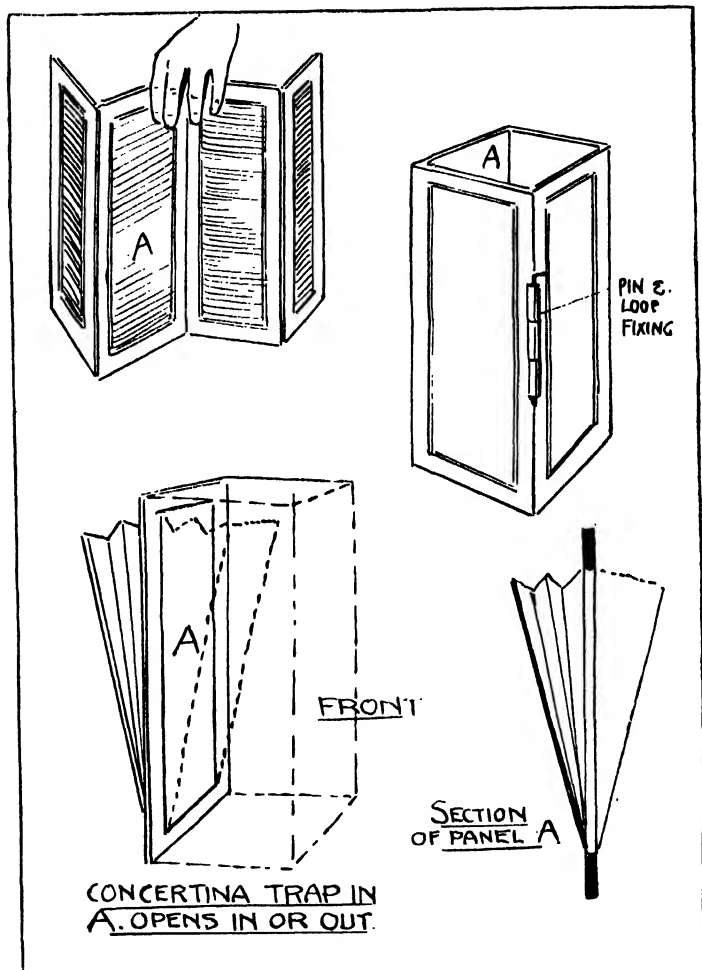
A PRODUCTION SCREEN

Having shown a four-sided screen, the performer folds it into a square and holds it together with a pin and loop fastening. (See illustration.) The performer at once dips his hand into the screen and produces a quantity of handkerchiefs, flowers, flags, etc. etc.

It will be seen that one panel of the screen has a concertina trap fixed to it. When the screen is first shown (see illustration) the trap is visible to the performer but not to the audience. The performer then swings the screen round to show the other side to the audience and in doing this he pushes on the trap which is again out of sight of the audience. All he has to do is to put the screen together and take out his load from the top.

The screen is shown and put together quickly. At the

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



A PRODUCTION SCREEN.

MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC

end of the trick the performer can take the pin out and show the screen once more ; of course, he takes care to keep the trap out of sight all the time, but as it swings in and out by a touch of the fingers there is no difficulty in doing this.

A NEW PRODUCTION BOX

Showing a small wooden box, the performer opens the lid and then allows all four sides to fall down ; the audience see through the framework of the box and are convinced that there cannot be anything concealed there. Yet when the performer closes up the box he can easily produce a quantity of handkerchiefs, a coil, and a flag, etc. etc.

The box is lined with black velvet. The things which are to be produced are concealed in the bottom of the box and are covered with a loose piece of black velvet which is kept in place by two strips of whalebone. (See illustration.) To get at the load the performer merely has to pull away the piece of black velvet, and "get busy"! The loads are packed away in partitions so that one load can be produced without disturbing the others.

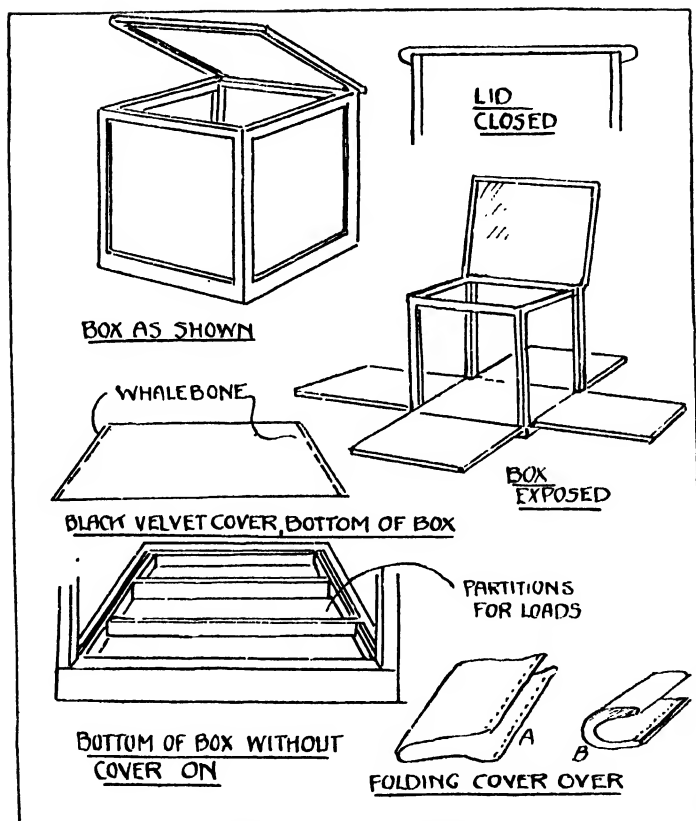
This box can be used at very close quarters ; the secret is well hidden.

A PRODUCTION CANISTER

This, to my mind, is one of the "plums" of the book—simple, but very good. The effect is produced instantly, without any trouble, and the working is practically fool-proof.

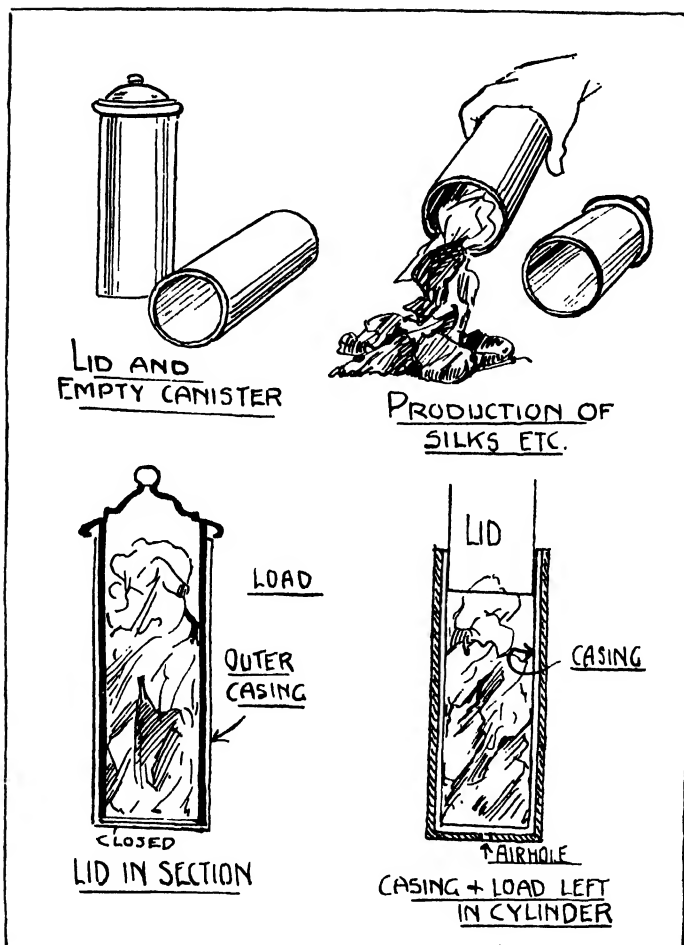
The performer shows an empty canister to the audience—a large tube with the lower end closed. He puts on the lid for a moment ; when he removes the lid the load is there—in the canister—and all that the performer has to do is to produce it and patter humorously at the same time—not a difficult matter.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



A New Production Box.

MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC



A PRODUCTION CANISTER.

G R E A T T R I C K S R E V E A L E D

That is the effect as the audience sees it, but, to be truthful, the description is not quite correct. The lid is not really a "lid," because it fits into the canister.

The "lid" is a hollow tube open at the lower end, and into this tube the load is placed before the performer starts to do the trick. The performer then places another tube over the one in the lid; this tube fits very easily and the lower end is closed. If the performer were to hold up the "lid" with the lower end towards the audience the audience would see that the lower end was closed and then there would be no trick. The performer merely picks up the lid and pushes it into the canister. The outer tube of the "lid" fits tightly in the canister and the load drops in with it.

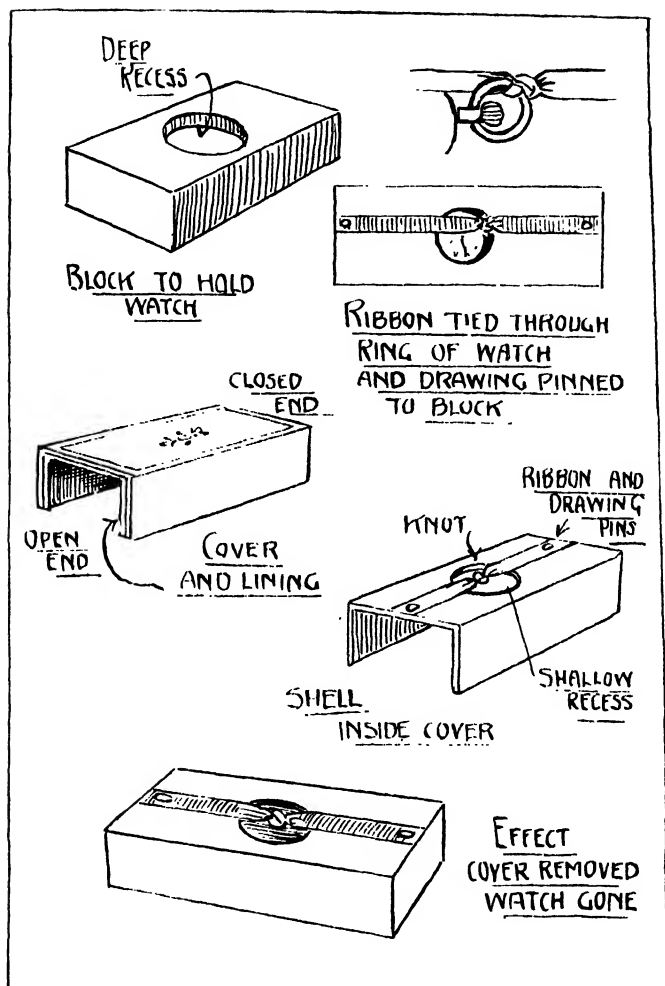
Could you have a simpler production? The illusion is perfect. If the lid is put on fairly quickly not one person in a thousand will notice that the lid goes into the canister and not outside it.

T H E M I S S I N G W A T C H

A small block of wood with a round recess cut in it is shown to the audience. The performer shows that a watch can be placed inside the recess. To keep the watch in place the performer ties two small pieces of ribbon to the bow of the watch and fastens the ends down with drawing-pins. He then covers the block for a moment with a wooden case. On removing the case the performer shows the ribbons still in place, but the watch is missing. (A duplicate watch can, of course, be produced from any place the performer fancies.) The ends of the ribbon which were attached to the watch are knotted together.

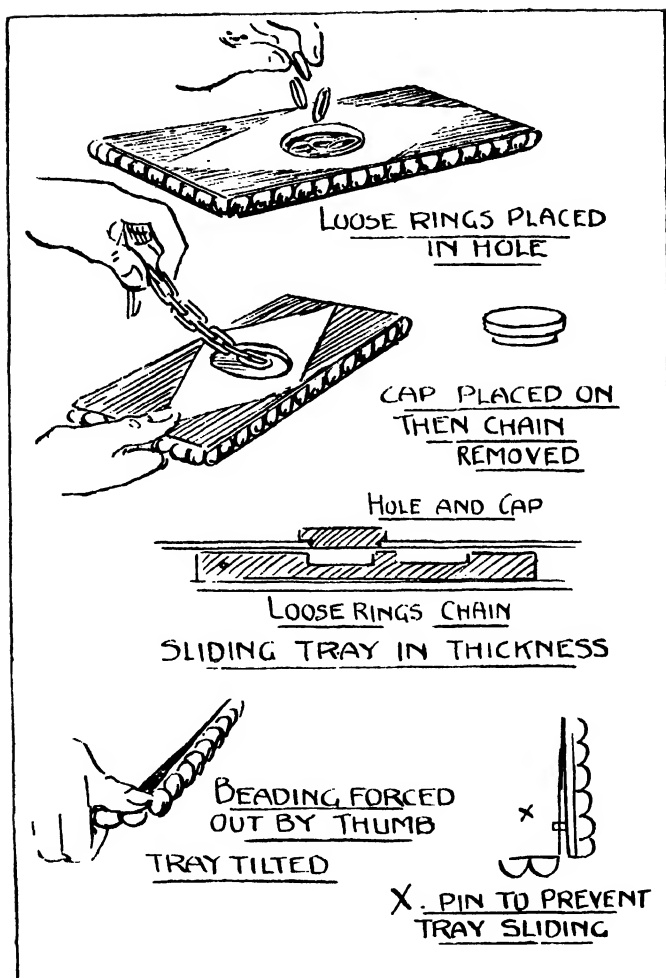
When I add that there is a "shell" hidden in the case I need not say much more! The "shell" has two ribbons fastened to it in the way described, and, of course, the shell completely hides the ribbons and watch which were fixed to the block in the first place.

MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC



THE MISSING WATCH.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



THE LINKED RINGS.

MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC

THE LINKED RINGS

A small tray with a hole in the centre is shown to the audience ; the hole does not come right through the tray but forms a little recess. Into this hole the performer drops a number of loose rings—or links of a chain ; he then places a cover over the hole. Then—very quietly—he takes off the cover and turns the tray upside down. All the rings have been linked together.

The secret is good. Inside the tray is a sliding tray with a little hole cut in it, and in the hole there is a short piece of chain. The sliding tray is held in position by means of a pin in the beading of the outer tray ; the pin prevents the inner tray from sliding until the performer wishes to do the trick. By merely forcing out this piece of beading with his thumb (see illustration) the performer is able to bring the inner tray into action. He tilts the tray slightly and the hole with the loose rings disappears and the other hole with the length of chain in it takes its place.

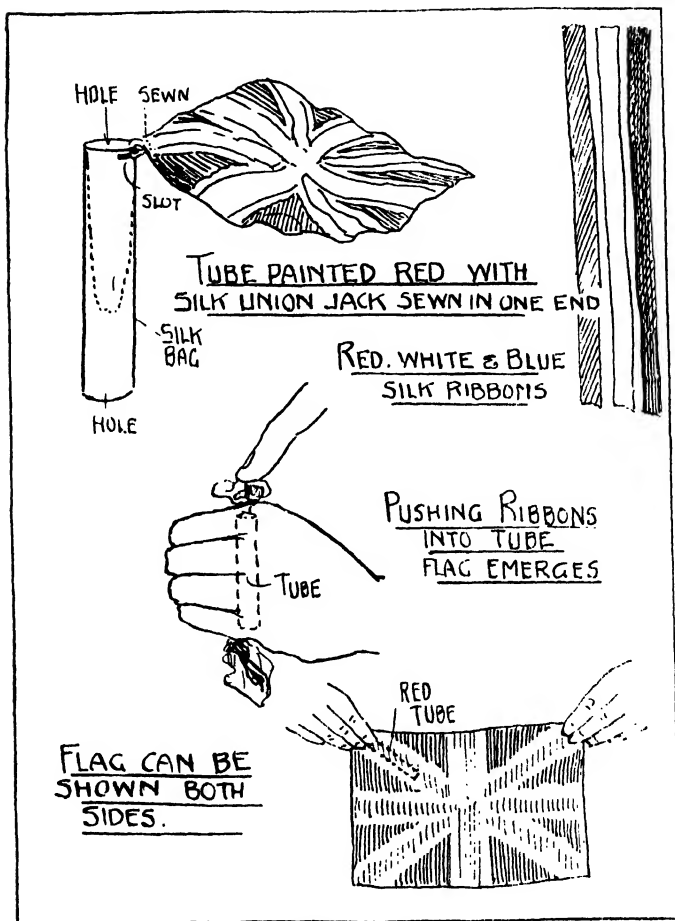
STREAMERS TO FLAG

The performer produces some red, white, and blue ribbons. Closing his left hand he pushes the ribbons into his fist and brings them out at the other end in the form of a flag, both sides of which can be shown to the audience. Apparently the ribbons have been blended together till they form a flag, but this is what really happens.

The ribbons are magically produced by the well-known match-box method. The drawer of a safety match-box is pushed out about half-way and into the space at the back of it the little coil is hidden. The performer picks up the match-box, strikes a match to warm his hands, and in closing the box pushes the coil into his hand. The rest of that part of the trick is easy.

When all eyes are on the ribbons the performer gets possession of a small tube, painted red. A small silk

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



STREAMERS TO FLAG.

MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC

bag is sewn to one end of the tube and a Union Jack is sewn to the same corner. (See illustration.) This fake can be concealed under the waistcoat, or in one of the pockets of the waistcoat. When the performer pushes the ribbons into the tube he naturally forces out the flag, and as the tube is painted red and is held on the flag (see illustration), both sides of the flag can be shown.

A very neat little effect.

A GOOD FLAG-STAFF

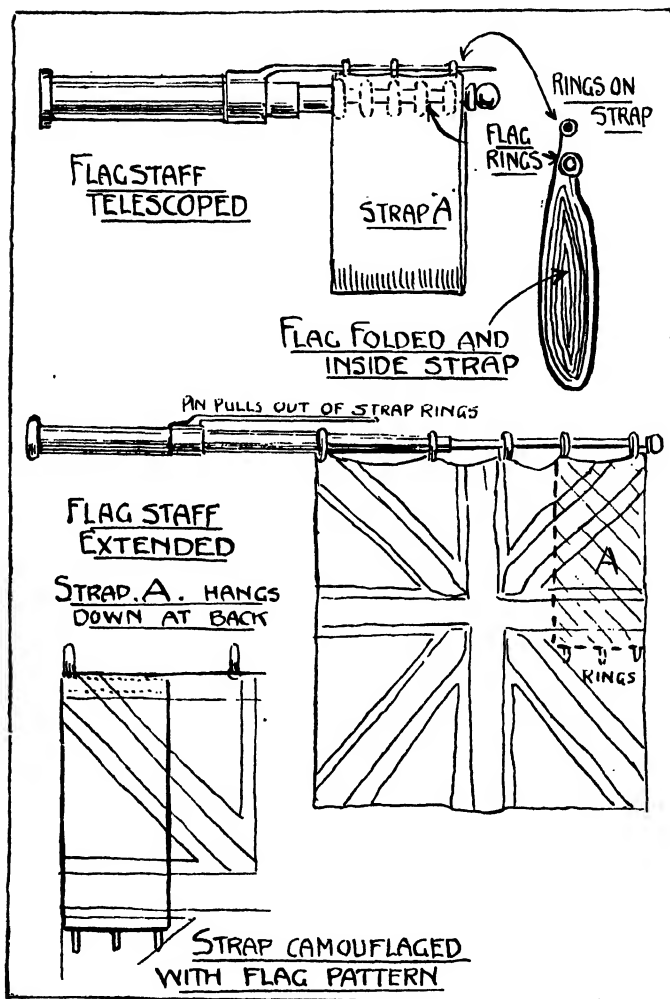
The telescopic flag-staff does not always work quite as smartly as one would like it to ; perhaps the flag does not unfold quickly enough or the staff gets " hung up " for a second or two by the flag.

Here is a way of making sure that the staff will behave properly by shooting out at once to its full extent. But that is only one improvement to be noticed in this improved staff. The flag is so arranged that directly the staff is " all out " the audience see the flag ; moreover, the performer is not worried about the position of the flag before he is going to produce the staff with the flag flying from it. The flag is kept safely in the right position for the trick until it is wanted.

The device is very simple. Attached to the top edge of the flag which is to appear is a small " strap " cut from another flag, and this " strap " has three small rings sewn to the lower edge. The big flag is pleated up and then the " strap flag " is passed round it. A stout pin attached to the handle of the staff is passed through the small rings on the " strap flag ", and the staff is then ready for the production.

If the reader will glance at the illustration he will see that when the flag is shot out the flag is carried off the pin and therefore unfolds immediately. A very ingenious idea.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



A GOOD FLAG-STAFF.

MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC

KARNACK'S SPIRIT HAND

The "spirit hand" is one of the oldest tricks we have, but this method is the newest, and it has the great advantage of being safe when the trick is being presented at very close quarters.

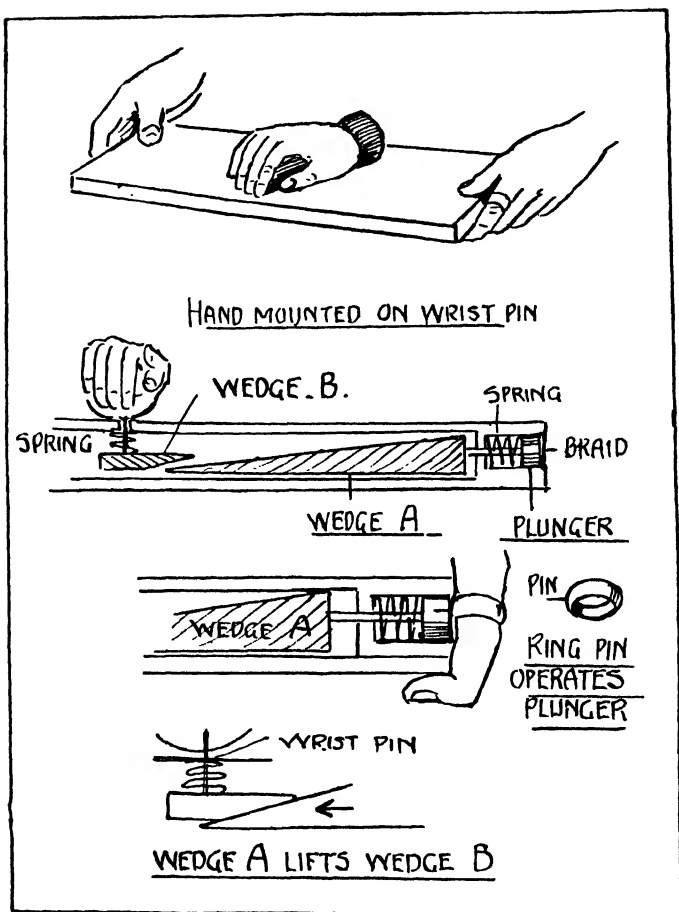
The performer comes forward with the hand on a small oblong tray. He can hold the tray with one hand while with the other hand he makes passes above and below the tray to prove the absence of "trickery". The usual questions are asked by the audience and the hand raps out the answers.

A glance at the illustrations will show the working of the trick. The wrist of the hand is mounted on a small pin which passes through a hole in the tray and is connected with a small wedge of wood in the tray. Between the wedge and the top of the tray there is a weak spring, which passes round the pin. Obviously, if the wedge is pressed upwards the hand is tilted; that is to say, the hand raps on the tray. When the pressure is removed the hand resumes its normal position.

The illustrations show how the wedge is pressed upwards. There is a longer wedge in the tray. The thin end of this wedge fits under the thin end of the smaller one. At the other end of the long wedge there is a pin which passes through a spring to a metal plunger. The plunger is level with the end of the tray and that end is closed by a piece of black braid. The performer wears a plain gold ring on the first finger of his right hand. This ring has a small pin fastened to it.

The pin on the ring passes through the braid to the top of the plunger, and a very small movement of the performer's first finger pushes down the long wedge, which thus passes under the smaller wedge and so lifts the hand. The working of the trick is very easy and the effect perfect.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



KARNACK'S SPIRIT HAND.

MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC

THE MESSAGE ON THE SCREEN

A member of the audience is asked to write a message on a slip of paper, fold it up, and put it in his pocket.

The performer calls attention to a magic lantern and a small screen on the stage. The lights are turned down for a moment and the lantern throws the actual message which was written on the screen.

The message is written on the top of a pad of paper in a wooden frame (see illustration.) The top sheet is torn off and the writer keeps it. Under the top sheet of the pad is a slip of thin paper and under this a sheet of carbon paper, face downwards. Therefore the message is written on the sheet under the carbon paper. Directly the lights are turned down the assistant gets possession of the duplicate message and inserts it in the lantern—the work of a moment.

THUMB-PRINTS

The secret of this little trick is so well concealed that it is practically perfect ; yet the trick can be learned by anyone in a couple of minutes.

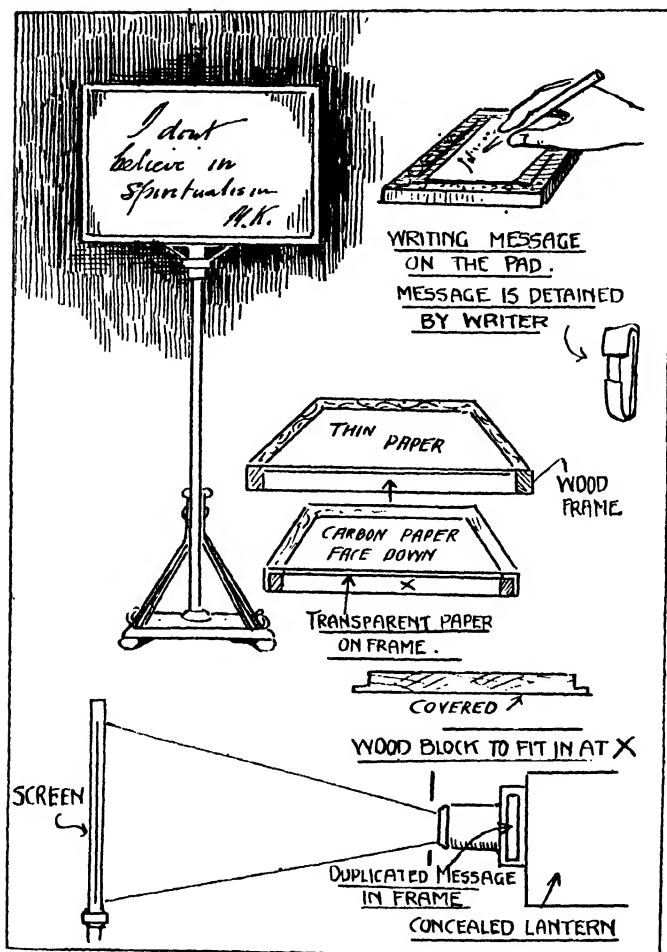
The performer shows a little slab of wood with three holes cut in it ; each hole is fitted with a rubber plug and over each hole there is a loose cover. The appearance of the apparatus is shown in the illustration.

After a little patter about finger-prints the performer asks someone in the audience to press on the knob of one of the covers. The person assisting is to do this when the performer has turned his back on the audience.

It will be seen that the three covers are painted red, white, and blue.

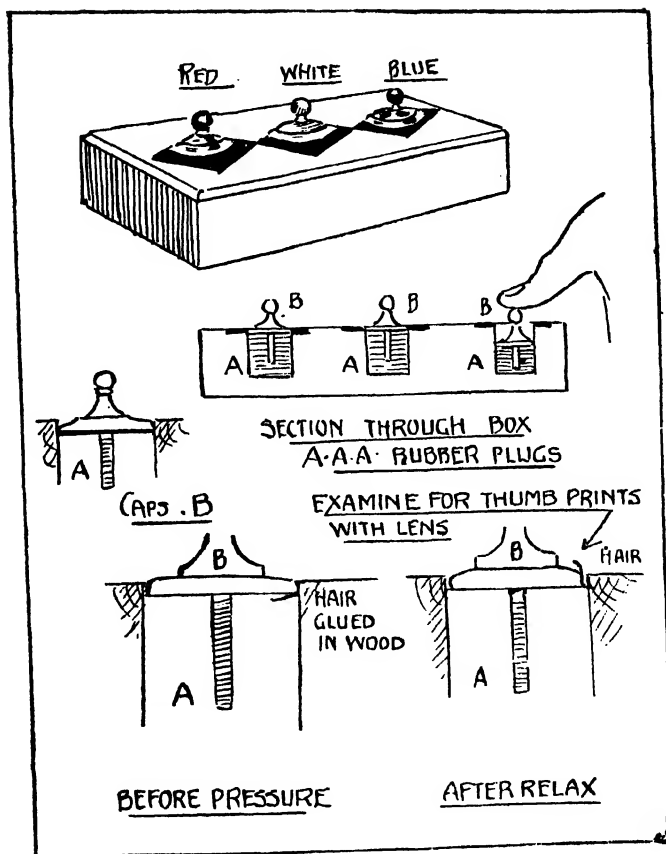
When the assistant has complied with the request the performer turns round and, using a magnifying glass, closely examines the three knobs for a moment and then announces which one has been touched.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



THE MESSAGE ON THE SCREEN.

MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC



THUMB PRINTS.

G R E A T T R I C K S R E V E A L E D

The trick can be repeated several times, for there is very little likelihood of the secret being discovered ; yet it is very simple.

If the reader will glance at the illustration entitled " Before Pressure ", he will see what really happens in the trick. At the edge of the two outer holes there are two hairs—one at each hole. If the cover is laid lightly over the top of one of these holes the hair is concealed, but if the cover is pressed down and then released, the cover, in rising, carries the tiny piece of hair with it and the hair is visible above the cover. The performer merely looks for a cover with a hair on it. The centre cover has no hair fitted to the edge of the hole, and therefore if no hair is visible the performer knows that the centre cover has been pressed down.

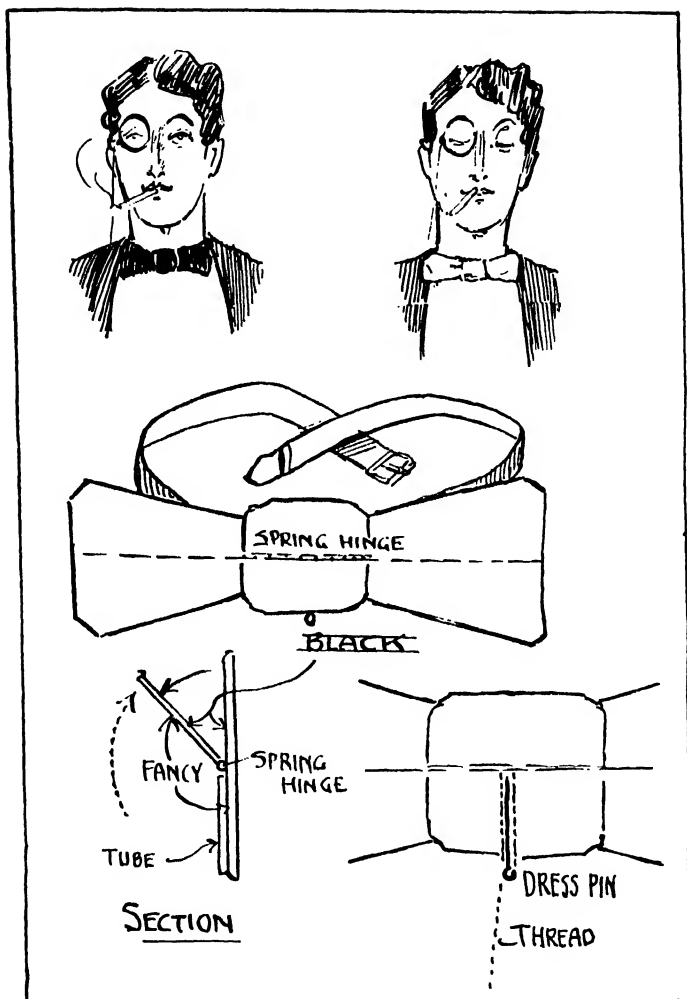
I think all readers will agree that it would be extremely difficult to invent a more ingenious pocket trick than this one.

T H E M A G I C A L T I E

The trick of changing a black tie to a white one can be introduced as a little comedy effect during the performance. The assistant makes signs to the performer to tell him that there is something wrong and finally points to the tie. The performer merely waves his hand in front of the black tie and it changes to a white one in the fraction of a second.

The tie is, of course, a trick one. Running right along the centre of the tie there is a hinge to which the lower half of the tie is attached ; on the other side of this half and on the half which it conceals the tie is white. The spring is held down by a pin, with its end blunted, and a thread goes from the pin, inside the performer's shirt, and so to one of his pockets. A pull on the pin releases the spring of the tie, and the pin is drawn out of the way and is concealed by the shirt.

MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC



THE MAGICAL TIE.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED

THE KELLAR GROWTH OF FLOWERS

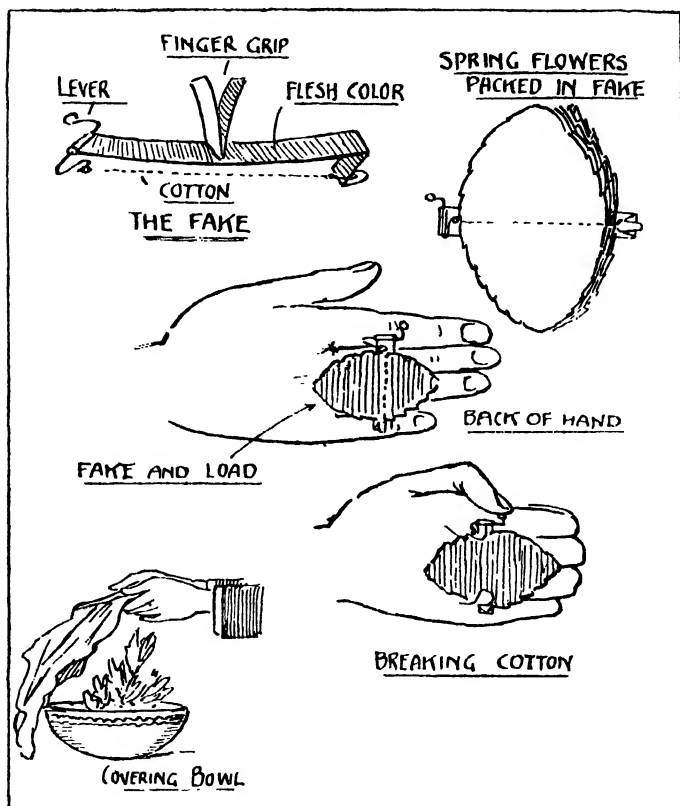
Standing on the stage, about three yards apart, are two small tables. They should be slightly higher than the ordinary tables. We will call them No. 1 and No. 2. The assistants bring forward two ordinary plant-pots and fill them with earth. (This may be blackened sawdust, being cleaner than earth.) While these preparations are being made the conjurer shows a large empty cone.

Unknown to the audience two other cones, each containing a plant, are concealed behind the tables. The conjurer places the empty cone over No. 1 plant-pot, and, on lifting it again, shows a small green shoot. This may be palmed in at the top of the cone and allowed to drop through it on to the plant-pot. Immediately he has lifted the cone, showing this little green shoot, the conjurer, with a natural movement, drops the cone over the cone hidden behind No. 1 table and so loads it with the prepared cone. Going to No. 2 table the conjurer places the cone over the pot, lifts it and at the same time releases the load. The audience see the tree, and while all eyes are upon it the conjurer, with a similar movement, places the empty cone over the loaded cone behind No. 2 table and gets that into the "visible cone". He then goes back to No. 1 table and produces the second tree. The assistants come forward and cut off the roses or oranges, place them in baskets, and distribute them to the audience. Each rose or orange has a little card attached to it bearing the performer's photograph and the printed line: "With ——'s compliments."

THE PELLEW FLOWER PRODUCTION

Although the effect of this trick—the production of a quantity of flowers—is old, the method I am giving away is modern and it has one or two good points in its favour. The working of the trick is very simple; the secret is well concealed; no cumbersome apparatus is needed.

MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC



THE PELLEW FLOWER PRODUCTION.

G R E A T T R I C K S R E V E A L E D

The performer, having shown his hands empty, holds up a small glass bowl for inspection. The performer covers the bowl for a moment with a silk handkerchief ; when he removes the handkerchief the audience see that the bowl is full of flowers.

The flowers are of the well-known spring variety, and they are packed, at the beginning of the trick, into a flesh-coloured fake which is fully described in the accompanying diagram. This fake stands, with the finger-grip upwards, behind the handkerchief on the table. Having displayed his hands for a moment the performer shows the bowl and then picks up the handkerchief ; at the same time he secretly picks up the fake which, being on the back of the hand, is not seen by the audience. In covering the bowl with the handkerchief the performer breaks the cotton which holds the flowers in the fake, and the flowers drop into the bowl. The working is safe and sure, and a very good effect is produced.

M A G I C A L S U G G E S T I O N S

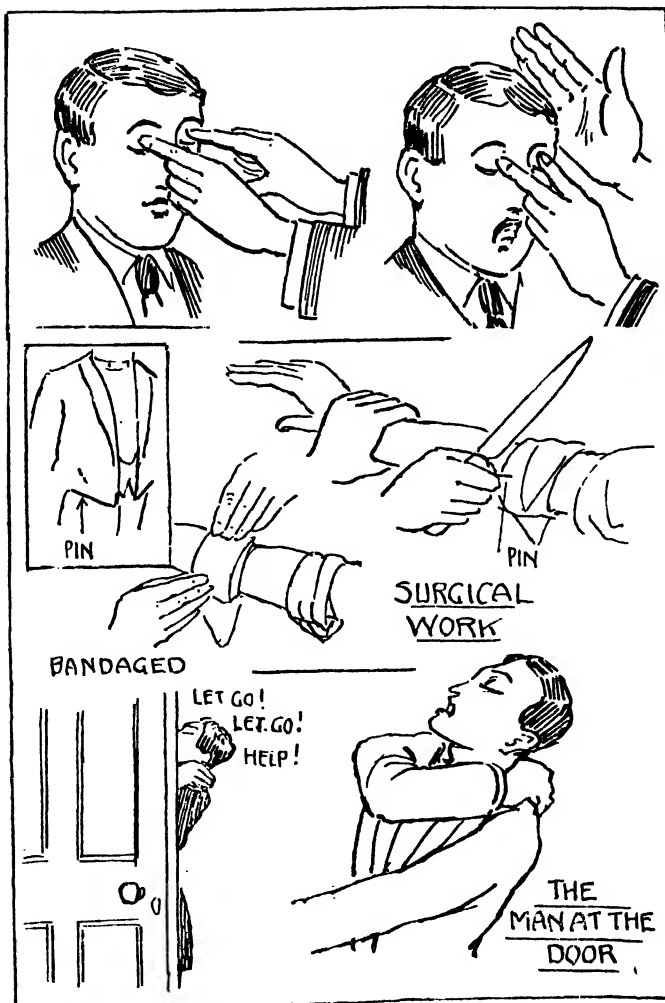
Everyone knows nowadays that the power of suggestion is a real force ; the good actor or the good speaker uses the power continually and so sways the minds of those who are listening to him.

The performer can introduce these little " magical suggestions " with a few remarks on those lines and then he offers to experiment on a member of the audience. A young man comes forward and sits down near the performer.

The performer calls attention to his hands ; there is nothing concealed in his hands. " But," says he, " there are other hands near you which you cannot see ; perhaps you may be able to feel the touch of those hands. I will try a short experiment."

The performer, extending his two forefingers, asks the young man to look at them. " Now," says the performer, " please close your eyes for a moment." The young man does so and the performer puts his two forefingers on

MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC



MAGICAL SUGGESTIONS. THOUGHT-READING SIMPLIFIED.

G R E A T T R I C K S R E V E A L E D

the man's eyes. "You can feel my fingers?" asks the performer, and the young man agrees that he can. "Let us repeat the experiment," says the performer, "for I see that it has not yet succeeded; I want to convince you that there is an invisible hand near you."

The performer puts his fingers on the man's closed eyes for a moment and asks him if he can feel anything else. The young man starts and says: "Yes"—in fact, he probably opens his eyes in surprise, but if he does so he sees the performer's two fingers pointing to him; apparently the performer has just lifted his fingers from the eyes. The puzzle is: What hand touched the young man's head?

The artist has given the clue to the mystery. The first part of the little performance is a "blind", just to convince the man that the performer is going to put his fingers on the man's eyes. But, when the experiment is repeated, the performer puts the second and first fingers of one hand on the man's eyes, and so has his other hand free; it is that hand that gives the "spirit" tap to the man's head.

The second magical suggestion can be worked up into a very realistic experiment, for the performer succeeds in persuading his assistant that he has cut across his arm with a large knife.

The assistant is asked to roll up his sleeves. The performer shows the knife and suggests that perhaps the assistant should close his eyes. The performer passes the knife—a very blunt one—lightly across the arm and asks if the cut can be felt. The assistant says: "No."

The performer tries again and this time the assistant jumps up firmly convinced that the performer has carried the joke too far and has really cut across his arm.

At the second attempt the performer secretly gets a pin from his coat and holds it against the blade of the knife. The assistant feels the prick of the pin on his arm and as the blade comes across immediately afterwards he is convinced that his arm has really been cut. Of course the performer must take care not to be too energetic in using the pin!

MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC

A tap at the door.

The performer goes to the door and voices are heard. The voices are raised, apparently in some quarrel. The audience—who ought to be rather alarmed at this point—hear the performer shouting: "Let go! Let go! Help!" There is the sound of a struggle, and the performer appears at the door with the arm of his assailant round his neck. Someone jumps forward to the performer's assistance, and he turns round quickly and smiles at the audience.

The arm that was round the performer's neck was his own right arm. The artist has shown the right position for it. The rest is acting—the power of suggestion really demonstrated.

The last experiment is very mysterious; I have known many people to be taken in by it. The performer, sitting opposite his "victim", asks him to extend his right hand. The performer says he will conduct a current of cold air on to the assistant's palm and he brings up his hand towards the palm but does not touch it. "Did you feel the cold air?" asks the performer. The answer is always "Yes", but the experiment is pure nonsense. There is no current of air, but the assistant, having been led to expect one, really believes that he feels it on his hand. Try it! It comes off every time.

THOUGHT-READING SIMPLIFIED

It is not difficult to understand why thought-reading tricks are not very popular with amateur magicians. The reason of their unpopularity is due to the fact that most people know quite well that all such tricks are performed by means of codes. As amateur conjurers are naturally compelled to perform before the same audiences over and over again, it follows that unless the code for the thought-reading trick they wish to show is very good there is every likelihood of the trick being given away.

On the other hand there is one very good reason why a thought-reading trick should be included in the reper-

G R E A T T R I C K S R E V E A L E D

toire of every amateur magician. A trick of this kind can be presented anywhere, at any time. No preparation of the room is required ; the audience may be permitted to sit all round the performer if they please. Moreover, if the code is a good one no great amount of practice is required.

As a thought-reading trick for the home circle the following cannot be beaten, and it has the merit of being extremely simple and most mystifying.

The effect of the trick is as follows. The performer's assistant goes out of the room. If the audience are very sceptical about the trick someone else may accompany the assistant and make sure that he, or she, is not anywhere near the room while the experiment is being prepared. It will, therefore, be obvious that the trick is not performed by the simple method of standing close to the keyhole of the door and listening to what is said in the room.

When everyone is satisfied on this point, the performer asks his audience to select a certain article in the room and to concentrate their thoughts on it. The assistant then returns and the performer, taking up his magic wand, points to various articles in the room. The moment his wand touches the article of which the audience are thinking, the assistant says : " Yes." To all the others she has shaken her head and merely said : " No."

The trick can be repeated several times, and as the code can be slightly altered from time to time without any consultation between the performer and his assistant, the trick becomes more and more puzzling with every performance.

Now for the secret, which, like the secret of all good conjuring tricks, is extremely simple. When the assistant returns to the room the conjurer points to various articles. He does this quickly, going from one to another without any hesitation, but before he touches the article of which everyone is thinking, he takes care to touch some black object. It is quite immaterial what the object is so long as it is black ; in every room there are usually several

MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC

black articles, such as a man's coat, a piece of black velvet ribbon on a lady's head, the fireplace, coals, ink, the back of a book, etc., etc. The assistant notes the colour of the object and knows that the next object to be touched will be the thing of which everyone is thinking.

After the first performance the conjurer should vary the code by making the "key" object a white one, and if the audience insist on another demonstration—as they probably will—it is as well to have another kind of code in readiness. In this case the performer and the assistant need not see each other the whole time. When the assistant comes back to the room the conjurer merely points to various articles and when he gets to the right one the assistant says: "Stop." In this case the conjurer and his assistant agree together that the tenth article is to be the right one. If the conjurer consents to still another experiment he should agree with his assistant that the fourteenth article is to be the one, and if there is still another performance the conjurer should point to only three objects in the room before he touches the one of which everyone is thinking. Of course the conjurer and his assistant must arrange the numbers and their order before the performance, but by keeping to those I have suggested all further trouble with regard to the preparation for the performance is saved.

Another excellent thought-reading trick is that in which the assistant is blindfolded, and while in that condition contrives to name any object which the conjurer holds in his hand. The simplest way to present the trick is to ask the assistant to go out of the room while the conjurer collects various portable articles from his audience and places them in a hat. Then some member of the audience is requested to go out of the room, blindfold the assistant securely and bring her back to the room. The conjurer speaks no word, but merely holds up the articles in the hat and the assistant tells him what each article is.

To do this the performer and his assistant agree beforehand that the articles shall be twelve things. A list is

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made and both performer and assistant learn it by heart. The list contains the names of things which will most certainly be found in any drawing-room full of people. Here is a specimen list: watch, coin (silver), pencil, bangle or bracelet, ribbon, handkerchief, silver matchbox, coin (gold), a key, watch-chain, coin (copper), letter.

The conjurer collects these things from the audience and simply holds them up, one at a time, in the pre-arranged order. The assistant pretends to have some difficulty in "reading" some of the things and so increases the mystery of a very good trick.

CHAPTER XI

HANDKERCHIEF TRICKS

SUGGESTIONS FOR A HANDKERCHIEF PRODUCTION ACT

THE performer comes forward with an empty opera hat, or he can borrow a silk hat or an opera hat from someone in the audience. He explains that he is going to use the hat as a kind of basket. Showing his empty hands he produces a silk handkerchief and places it in the hat.

"If I wanted more than one handkerchief," he says, "I should have rubbed my hands together a little harder—and there you are." With this he produces half a dozen handkerchiefs in his hands and puts them in the hat.

"Now," says the performer, "will someone please mention any number under a hundred. Eighty-three? Thank you."

The conjurer places his hands in the hat, picks up a few of the handkerchiefs, returns them to the hat, and rubbing them between his hands produces a large number of silk handkerchiefs of various colours. He pretends to count these, taking each one from the hat very quickly, and ends on eighty-three.

"Of course," says the conjurer, "if you had said ninety-three it would have made no difference to me, because we have a lot more here." He produces a number of other handkerchiefs and shows how difficult it is to stow them all into the hat. He takes them out again and produces a number of other handkerchiefs until he has a large pile of silks on his table in front of the hat. Taking up a pile of these handkerchiefs with his two hands, he crunches them up into a ball and allows them to drop, immediately producing two large flags

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which hang down from lines extending right across the stage.

Now for the explanation of "how it is done". The production of the first handkerchief is managed with the aid of a false finger. In the act of putting the handkerchief into the hat the conjurer also gets rid of the false finger by putting it into the hat at the same time. He then gets a handkerchief ball from under his vest and produces half a dozen more handkerchiefs. These he places in the hat. He then draws up his sleeves a little way, and the audience see his cuffs. What they do not see, however, is this. The cuffs are really only "half cuffs"—quite narrow. Underneath both cuffs the conjurer has a number of silk handkerchiefs tied round his arms with a thread. Placing his hands into the hat the conjurer slips the half cuffs over his hands, leaves them in the hat and breaks the threads, thus releasing the loads of handkerchiefs. By rubbing these together they immediately expand, making a large pile of handkerchiefs.

For the final production of the flags the conjurer makes use of his table. The flags are concealed in a well in the table and are already attached to lines running down the legs of the table and so across the carpet to the wings. When the conjurer has produced his "eighty-three" handkerchiefs—or any quantity the audience call for—he picks up all the handkerchiefs in both hands, and so secretly takes out the flags from the table. Holding the mass between his hands, he throws it up and his assistants at the wings immediately draw up the lines, thus exposing the flags which hang down and fill the stage.

ONE FROM THREE

The performer ties three handkerchiefs together by the corners and places them on his table; he then shows a soup-plate and, without any false moves, covers the handkerchiefs with the plate. Everything seems perfectly fair.

HANDKERCHIEF TRICKS

Without any hesitation the performer at once springs two surprises on the audience. He puts his hands on the plate and pulls a handkerchief through it; the handkerchief is tossed on one side and the performer lifts the plate, showing only two handkerchiefs on the table. Apparently, he has performed the impossible feat of pulling a handkerchief through a solid plate, and has made the trick still more impossible—if I may use that expression—by first tying the three handkerchiefs together.

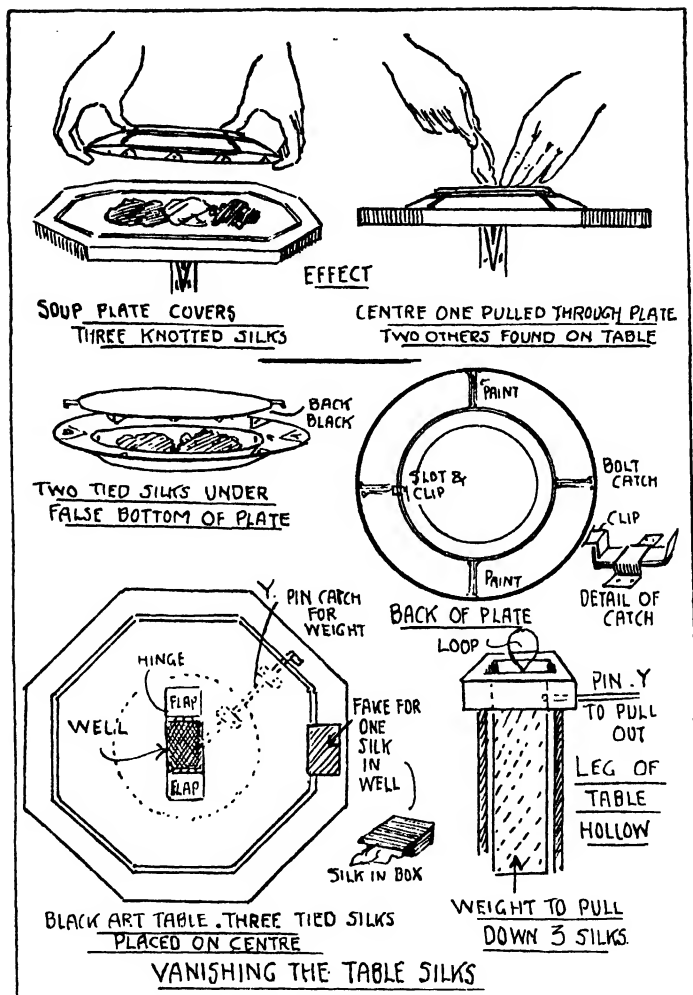
Although the effect is shown in a moment, a good deal of preparation is needed to bring it about.

The first problem to be solved is the exchange of the three handkerchiefs for two handkerchiefs. The three handkerchiefs are secretly slipped under a loop of thread, or fine catgut, in the centre of the table; this loop is attached to a heavy weight in the hollow leg of the table. When the table is set for the trick this heavy weight is held to the top of the leg by means of a simple pin catch, the working of which is illustrated. By merely pulling out the pin the performer releases the weight which draws the three handkerchiefs down the leg of the table.

The two tied handkerchiefs which are to appear in place of the three are concealed in the plate by means of a false bottom, painted white on one side, to resemble the bottom of the plate, and black on the other, so that when it falls on the table it will not be seen. The false bottom is held in place by means of a simple bolt catch which the performer can manipulate with one finger when he is putting the plate on the table.

It now remains to be seen how the performer can apparently pull a handkerchief through the solid plate. If the reader will turn to the illustrations he will see that the table is an eight-sided one. Each side has an ornamental black patch on the top, but the artist has drawn only one of these—the patch which hides the fake for the production of a handkerchief. This fake is simply a small black box, open at one end, and having a metal clip on the top. The performer merely has to lift the

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ONE FROM THREE.

HANDKERCHIEF TRICKS

fake into his hand by catching the clip between his second and third fingers. The appearance of the table remains unaltered when the fake is removed because the part of the table which it occupied is painted black. The performer, with the fake in his right hand, puts this hand on the plate and quickly pulls out the handkerchief with the other hand ; the illusion is perfect ; the handkerchief appears to be coming right through the plate. Directly the handkerchief is clear of the fake the performer takes it in the other hand and puts it down ; of course, in doing this, he secretly leaves the fake under it. Then all he has to do is to lift the plate and show the two handkerchiefs.

A NOVEL VANISHING HANDKERCHIEF

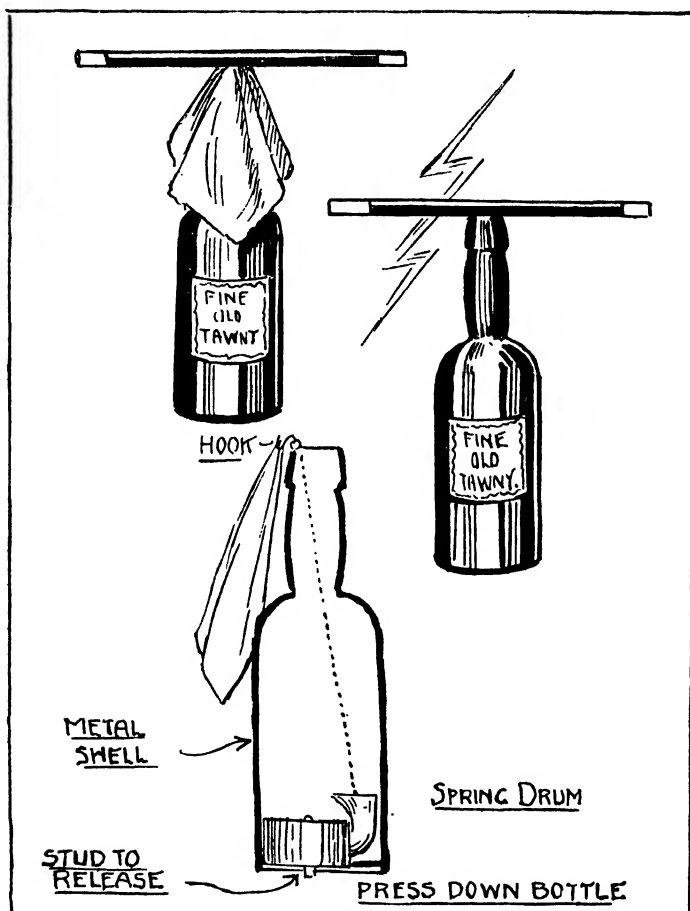
Having shown an empty wine-bottle—and expressed his regret at its emptiness—the performer throws a small handkerchief over the top of it and then balances his wand on the top of the bottle.

Directly he puts the bottle on the table the handkerchief disappears. A duplicate handkerchief can be produced in any way that appeals to the performer—say, from the back of his collar, or from a lighted candle, or an envelope previously shown to be empty.

The trick is in the bottle, in which a spring drum, with a thread, is fitted. The illustrations explain the trick correctly. The thread is drawn out to the top of the bottle and is held there by a tiny hook of wire with a larger hook attached to it. The performer does not really place the handkerchief right over the top of the bottle ; he leaves room for the escape of the handkerchief. Having engaged the hook in the handkerchief, the conjurer puts his wand over the top of the bottle, but takes care to put it in front of the hook. The wand is well weighted, so that the passage of the handkerchief into the bottle shall not upset it.

It will be seen that the action of putting the bottle on the table presses on the release stud ; the spring drum

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A NOVEL VANISHING HANDKERCHIEF.

HANDKERCHIEF TRICKS

comes into action immediately and the handkerchief disappears into the bottle in a flash.

A BOTTLE OF INK AND A HANDKERCHIEF

The performer holds up a bottle of ink. The bottle is transparent, and the performer tilts it so that the audience can see through it; he then places the bottle on a small stand.

The next thing to do is to vanish a small handkerchief—in conjurer's language; to be strictly correct no one can vanish a handkerchief, but a magician can cause a handkerchief to vanish.

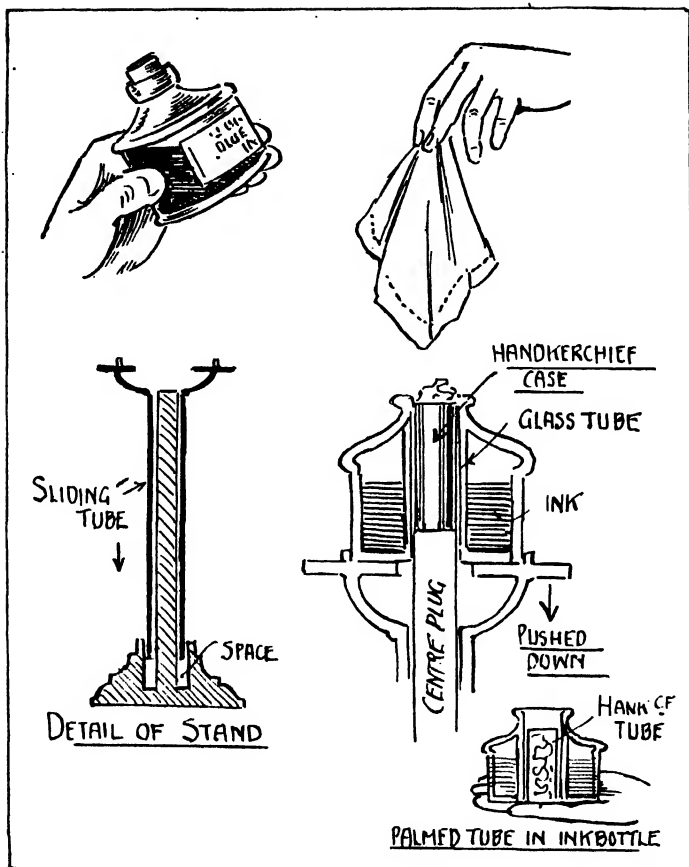
This little feat being accomplished by the performer's pet method, the surprise of the trick follows. The performer goes to the bottle, removes the cork and, from the bottle of ink takes out the handkerchief—perfectly dry and unstained.

The effect is brought about partly by the bottle and partly by the stand. The bottle is fitted with a little glass tube in the centre; this tube reaches nearly to the top of the bottle and it is open at the bottom; thus the ink cannot touch anything inside the tube.

After the performer has shown the bottle in the way described he stands it on his left hand for a moment while he calls attention to the stand. In his left hand the performer has palmed a small brass tube with a handkerchief inside it; this tube fits closely into the glass tube of the bottle and the performer works it into place while he is talking about the stand—the work of a moment.

The appearance of the stand is shown in the illustration. The bottle is placed on the two arms at the top of the stand. These arms are connected with a sliding tube round the centre of the stand, in which there is a solid plug. Thus, when the performer places the bottle on the arms and presses down, the plug in the centre of the stand forces up the handkerchief tube in the bottle. The rest is easy.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



A BOTTLE OF INK AND A HANDKERCHIEF.

HANDKERCHIEF TRICKS

It will be seen that if the bottle were not transparent there would be nothing much in the trick; the fact that the audience can see through the bottle when the ink is tilted on one side sets them guessing.

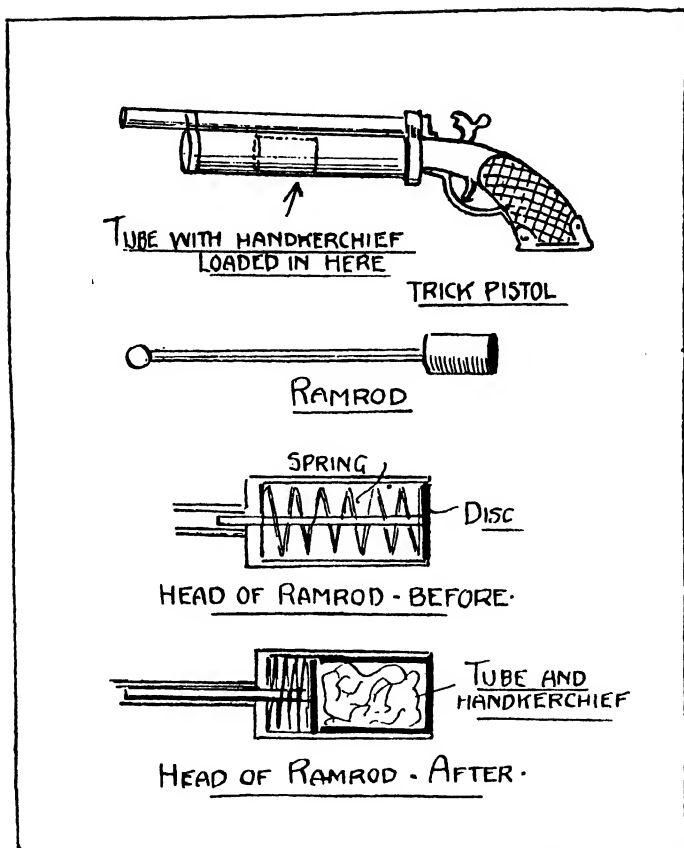
A HANDKERCHIEF PISTOL

By the use of this pistol the performer is able to recover—secretly, of course—a handkerchief which has been loaded into the barrel of the pistol.

As a rule, when a magician causes a handkerchief to vanish mysteriously and to reappear—equally mysteriously—in some other place he uses two handkerchiefs just alike. By the aid of this pistol the performer can have the handkerchief marked before he loads it into the pistol, and this of course adds enormously to the effectiveness of the trick.

If the reader will turn to the illustrations he will see the construction of the pistol. Half-way down the barrel there is a loose tube, closed at one end. The performer pushes the handkerchief into the barrel with the small end of the ramrod and then, showing the other end—apparently carelessly—he completes the job by ramming in that end. I say “apparently carelessly” because the large end appears to be solid, and therefore anyone who starts to think that with the ramrod the performer is able to get hold of something inside the barrel has to think again. To be candid, however, the large end of the ramrod is not solid. As will be seen from the illustration, the end is formed of a tube, but inside the tube there is a metal disc fitted to the top of a weak spring. The spring keeps the disc level with the top of the tube. But, of course, when the performer pushes in the large end of the ramrod the spring is depressed and the tube takes up the small tube into which the handkerchief has been pushed, and as the end of that tube is closed the audience see nothing unusual when the performer withdraws the ramrod. Afterwards, an assistant comes forward to clear something away from the table and takes

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A HANDKERCHIEF PISTOL.

HANDKERCHIEF TRICKS

the ramrod away with him. The handkerchief can then be caused to reappear magically from a nest of boxes, or the centre envelope in a nest of envelopes, etc. etc. There must be at least a hundred possible endings to this good effect.

THE IMPROVED GHOST TUBE

A Ghost Tube which can be given out for examination before the performance is obviously better than the usual Ghost Tube which the performer has to keep entirely to himself all the time. In this case the tube is unprepared. After it has been examined the performer stands it on his table and closes the top end with a piece of tissue paper and a ring. He reverses the tube and closes the other end in the same way. Immediately, without any fumbling, he can break the paper at one end and produce a quantity of silk handkerchiefs, flags, etc., etc.

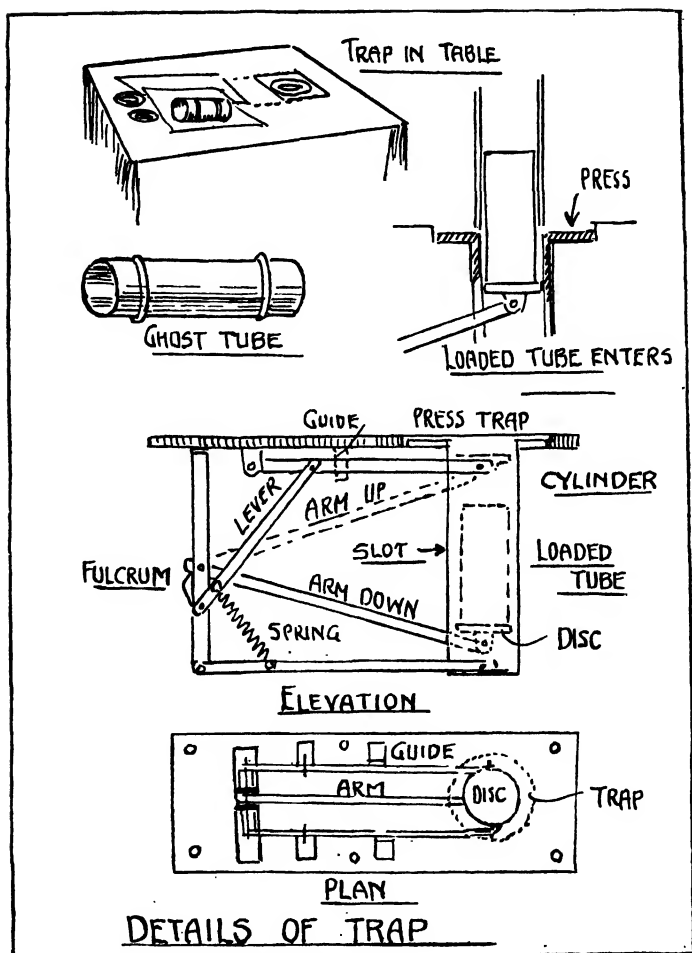
The load is got into the tube secretly by the use of a special table fitted with a press trap. The working of this trap is shown clearly in the diagram. It will be seen that by merely pressing down on the tube when the performer is closing one end of it he causes the loaded tube to rise into the visible tube. When the performer is closing the other end of the tube he moves it to another spot on the table.

A MYSTERIOUS HANDKERCHIEF

Showing a large sheet of paper the performer rolls it into a tube, fastens the ends together with wire clips, and stands the tube in a tumbler. He puts a coloured handkerchief into the paper tube and passes his wand over it. He then lifts the tube and shows that the handkerchief has vanished. The tube can be shown "end on" to the audience and the glass held up to them.

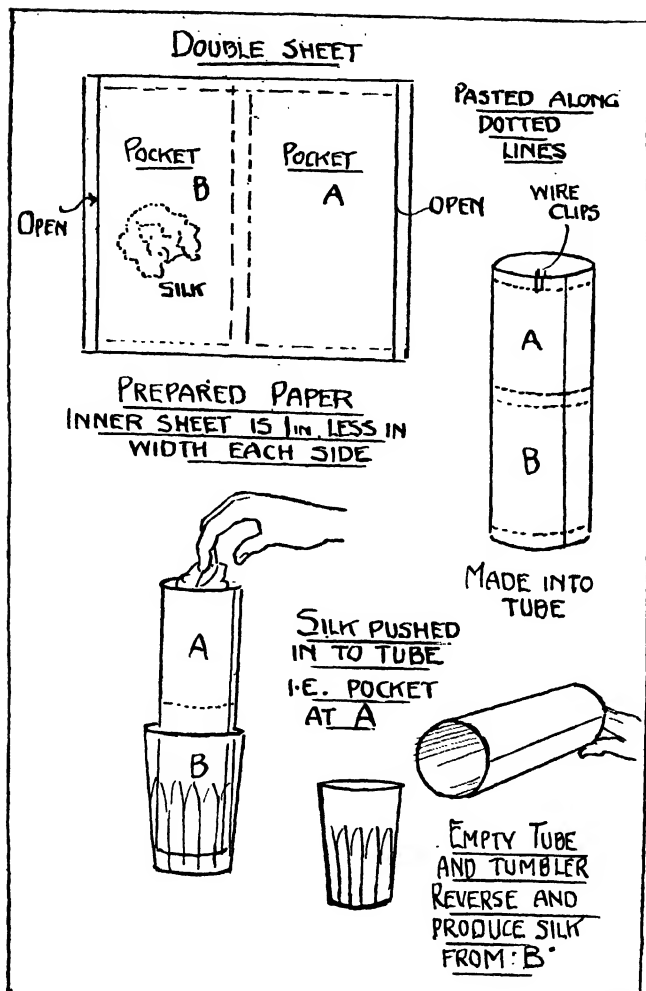
The performer replaces the tube in the glass and says

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THE IMPROVED GHOST TUBE.

HANDKERCHIEF TRICKS



A MYSTERIOUS HANDKERCHIEF.

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he will call the handkerchief back again. Another pass with the wand and the performer reaches into the tube and takes out a handkerchief of a different colour. The tube can again be shown to the audience.

The apparatus for this double mystery can be home-made, for the secret is entirely in the sheet of paper. My artist has drawn it in such a way that no further explanation is necessary. The reader will soon see that the paper is really a double one with the two sides open but fastened in the centre, and so, when the paper is rolled into a tube, there are two pockets in it—an upper and a lower; in the lower pocket the performer places a coloured silk handkerchief before he begins the trick.

The tube is put into the tumbler with the empty pocket uppermost. The handkerchief is put into that pocket. The performer takes out the tube to show the audience that the handkerchief has vanished. In replacing the tube in the tumbler the performer secretly reverses it and is so able to produce the other handkerchief.

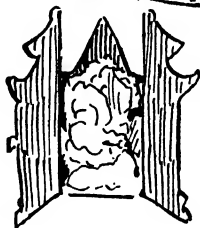
THE NEWEST SOUP PLATE AND THE HANDKERCHIEFS

I imagine that all my readers know the effect of this trick, but for the benefit of any beginners I may say that the performer shows a soup-plate and places it, upside down, on his table. He then causes two handkerchiefs to vanish, lifts the plate, and—there they are. How did the handkerchiefs—or, rather, duplicates of the handkerchiefs which vanished—get under the plate?

All kinds of methods of getting over that little difficulty—some very good and some not quite so good—have been devised; some of them are unnecessarily complicated. Here is a very simple method which has the merit of being easy to work and certain in its working.

The plate appears to be a china one, but it is really enamelled metal and it has the well-known willow pattern painted on it. The little pagoda in the centre provides a

HANDKERCHIEF TRICKS



DOORS OF PAGODA
OPENED
SILKS INSIDE



SECTION OF SOUP PLATE

THE NEWEST SOUP PLATE AND THE HANDKERCHIEFS.

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suitable hiding-place for the handkerchiefs until their appearance is required. It will be seen that the doors of the pagoda are real doors ; in a small compartment under them the two handkerchiefs are placed. The doors, which are fitted with very weak springs, are then closed and a long pin keeps them in that position. Directly the performer has placed the plate on the table he pulls out the pin, the doors open, and the handkerchiefs fall on the table.

When he lifts the plate to show the handkerchiefs the performer keeps the back of it to the audience ; he then picks up one of the handkerchiefs, displays it, and tosses it on to the plate. He repeats the movements with the other handkerchief and thus the audience never get a chance of seeing the open doors of the pagoda.

I do not think it is necessary to explain how to cause two handkerchiefs to vanish, but I may say that in my opinion the old-fashioned "vanisher", worked with elastic, provides one of the best methods.

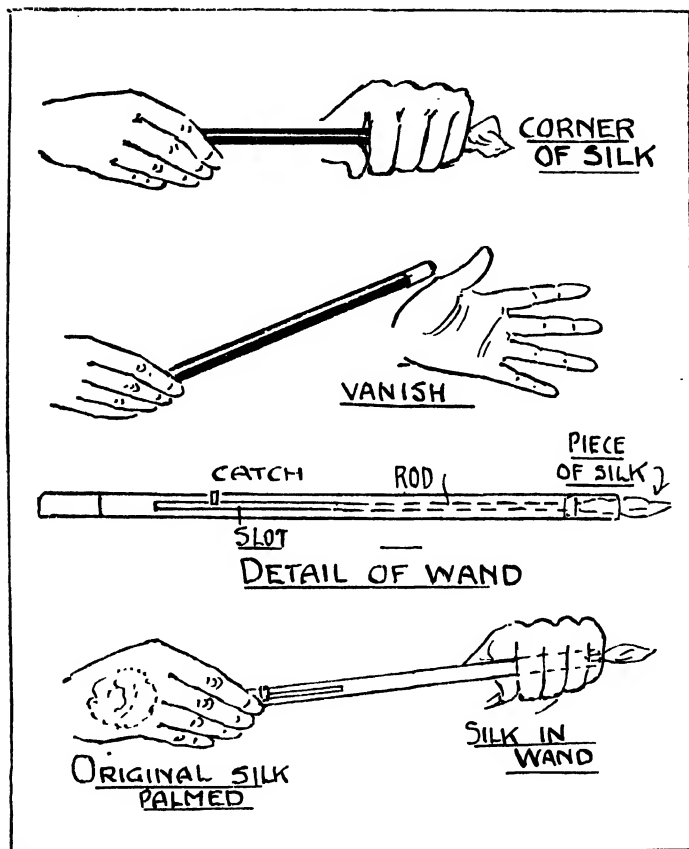
HORACE GOLDIN'S HANDKERCHIEF VANISH

Once more I have to express my gratitude to my old friend, Horace Goldin, for a very neat little trick.

The performer, wishing to cause the magical disappearance of a handkerchief, rolls it between his hands and—apparently—leaves it in his left hand. Any doubt that the audience may have on that point is dispelled when the performer picks up his wand and pushes it into the hand, for they see a corner of the handkerchief hanging from the hand. This corner is taken into the hand which is opened and shown empty ; the handkerchief has vanished.

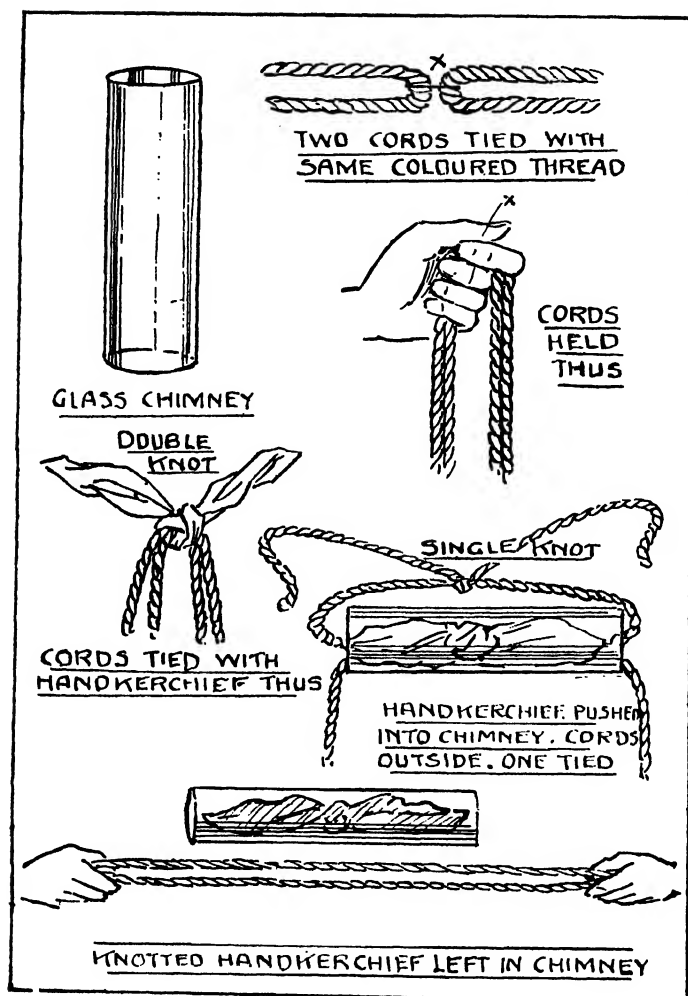
The trick is mainly in the wand. The handkerchief is apparently taken by the left hand but is palmed in the right. The left hand is kept closed as though it held the handkerchief and the right hand picks up the wand. There is a sliding rod inside the wand and a small piece of silk is attached to the end of the rod.

HANDKERCHIEF TRICKS



HORACE GOLDIN'S HANDKERCHIEF VANISH.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



A HANDKERCHIEF AND A GLASS CHIMNEY.

HANDKERCHIEF TRICKS

By means of a little catch which protrudes from the wand the performer is able to push up the rod and the little piece of silk, which the audience take to be the original handkerchief, comes into view. Then the rod is drawn back into the wand and the handkerchief has vanished.

A HANDKERCHIEF AND A GLASS CHIMNEY

For this capital trick, based on the good old "Ropes and Rings", I am indebted to my friend Murray, the escapologist.

Two cords are tied in the middle with a thread and then arranged in the way shown in the diagram. The performer holds the cords in his hand in such a way that the "join" cannot be seen. Borrowing a handkerchief the performer ties it round the cords at the place where they are held together by the thread and then passes the two cords through a glass lamp chimney and pulls on them until the handkerchief is in the chimney.

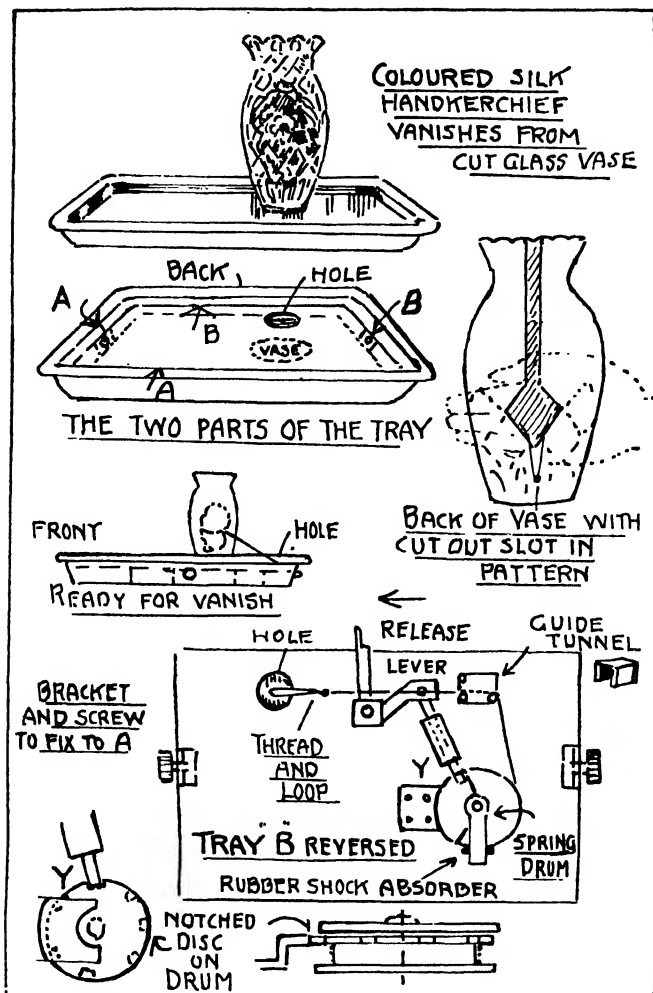
Two assistants hold the ends of the cords. The performer takes an end from each assistant and ties a single knot in front of the chimney. He then instructs the assistants to pull hard on the cords when he says "Go!" This movement breaks the thread and releases the cords so that they appear outside the chimney in the manner shown in the illustration.

THE HANDKERCHIEF AND THE GLASS VASE

The performer holds a silver tray, with a large glass vase on it. He puts a coloured handkerchief in the vase. At a word from the performer the handkerchief dissolves—that is to say, disappears completely.

The vase has a piece cut out of it, and the handkerchief is attached to a thread. This thread passes through a hole into the inside of the tray where it is connected

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THE HANDKERCHIEF AND THE GLASS VASE.

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with a spring drum. Directly the performer releases the spring—a tiny lever on the outside of the tray enables him to do this—the handkerchief is drawn, in a flash, into the tray. The movement is so quick that the eye cannot follow it.

CHAPTER XII

THE MAGICAL INVENTORS—A TRIBUTE

THE real makers of magic are seldom heard of. They are the men who invent, those mechanical geniuses whom the public never meet. In the highest class of magic, there have been, and are, men who invent, and who, as performers, demonstrate their effects to the world—but they are a select few. Such as Houdini, John Nevil Maskelyne, Chung Ling Soo, Howard Thurston, Chefalo, and Horace Goldin, come into this class.

Generally speaking, performers are not inventors. They are the showmen, the demonstrators on whom the spotlight of publicity is incessantly focused. The men who make this possible for them are hidden away from the public gaze in work-rooms and tool-sheds. They are there, working patiently, year in and year out—inventing here a simple pocket trick, there an amazing stage illusion.

There could be no such thing as magic were it not for these inventors. In my lifetime, I have met many scores of them, and have never ceased to be amazed at the patience and modesty that so often characterizes them and their work. Many of the best are now unfortunately dead, and not a few of them are quite forgotten. That is my main reason in devoting this short chapter to them.

To write even a few words on *all* the inventors I have known would be quite impossible in a work of this nature. As it is, I have chosen rather more than a dozen, each of whom, in his own particular way, has left an indelible stamp on world magic, though his name may have passed from memory. In most cases, the sketches of my

THE MAGICAL INVENTORS

subjects are very short—for the excellent reason that I lack biographical data concerning them. And perhaps this is as well, for if the material were at my command I have little doubt that I should spread myself to lengths that might inconvenience and bore my reader!

Let me make it clear that I am setting only a few names down in alphabetical order. I am severely conscious of omissions, but I have already explained that this is unavoidable. To attempt to tabulate my subjects in an order of merit would be, I feel, uncalled for and unfair. My whole idea is to provide some small reminder of them, and their services to magic.

Montague ALBERT, whose real name was Armstrong, performed for several years as a magician in South Africa. He was a very able mechanic and invented dozens of ingenious tricks, the best of which was probably his Card Frame. This gave an entirely new angle to the Restored Card Trick, for the card re-appeared in the frame piece by piece. The audience was able to watch a destroyed card build itself up from six or eight separate pieces. Montague Albert's mechanical tables were masterpieces of their kind, and are still largely used throughout the world. Amongst other of his inventions was the Roman Candle production of a vanished card or handkerchief, and a fine stage illusion called the Guillotine, in which a man handcuffed to the scaffold vanished the instant the knife fell. Albert also designed and constructed numerous ventriloquial figures which, at the time, were considered the best in the world. He died from consumption during the war, at the age of fifty.

Henry BATE is one of the few old-time inventors still alive. For many years he was chief mechanic to David Devant, and in the past fifty years he has invented and made more tricks than any other inventor. Two of his most ingenious ideas are seen in "The Bottle Penny" and the "Cut and Restored Cotton Reel". Bate is also

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the inventor of a rifle, and the cycle gear case, now utilized throughout the world.

John BROWN was born a hundred years ago, and up to the age of thirty had no magical knowledge whatsoever. His calling was that of a buyer in a silk warehouse near St. Paul's Churchyard. One day, a man in a restaurant showed him the cups and ball trick, and a number of faked playing-cards. Brown bought the cards, took them home, and studied their mechanism.

A few weeks later, he called on various London magical depots with copies of the faked cards he had made himself. The copies were neater and smoother in working than the originals, and he very soon accumulated orders. Unable to cope with these himself, he showed his daughters how the cards should be made. Further orders followed, and in a comparatively short while he was engaging a number of other young girls to help him in his work.

Brown was not, however, a mere copyist. After improving on many of the mechanical card tricks of his time, he turned his attention to some original effects. One of his best efforts was the "Barber's Pole from an Egg". This trick proved immensely popular; and in the copies sold to the magical depots, only the closest examination showed that the shell had been severed to allow the introduction of the collapsible pole. Others of Brown's inventions are the "Flapcard", the "Bouquet from a Candle", and the "Boxes from a Hat". His "Walking Pip" was a great improvement on the first effect of its kind, and a true masterpiece of delicate mechanism. Spring flowers, as now universally used, are Brown's improvement on de Kolta's original idea. Brown died at the age of eighty, and was working until a few weeks before his death. A daughter, living near London, carries on his work.

Richard CRAWFORD, a very talented metal-worker, specialized in the construction of artistic oil-lamps in London fifty years ago. Professor Bland, well known as a magical maker (though not an inventor) commissioned him to make several tricks, and with this brief introduction

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to magic, Crawford started up as an inventor, improver, and maker on his own account. His work was delicate and extremely efficient, and for some years he earned a considerable income. Among his best efforts are "The Flying Lamp", the "Dove Plates", and the "Multiplying Coin". He died at the age of eighty in straitened circumstances.

Thomas HOWELL for many years worked as a mechanic to John Nevil Maskelyne. In the famous magical sketch "Will, the Witch, and the Watchman", the trick box was of Howell's design and construction. His work was comprehensive, but his speciality was boxes with concealed panels and drawers, and so skilful was it that it was impossible to detect his secrets even on close examination. Howell also constructed tricks for David Devant and Ernst Thorn, the German. His son was employed with Maskelyne's Ltd., until the firm went into liquidation in 1935.

John McCATHIE, originally a bookbinder, specialized in tricks in which cardboard was largely utilized. I made his acquaintance when supervising the magical department of a leading London store, and through giving him orders at a bad time with him, earned his friendship and lifelong gratitude. McCathie invented and improved a great number of tricks, and in his particular sphere of cardboard work, his skill has never been equalled. His two best efforts were the "New Inexhaustible Box" and the "Improved Hat Die". He died shortly after the war, more than seventy years of age.

The MARTINKA Brothers were Germans by birth, who established a firm in New York for the manufacture of every type of trick and illusion to specification. They would make either to plan or from the description of the effect of a trick as given to them. All their work was first-class, and amongst their customers were Herrmann the Great, and Howard Thurston. For Horace Goldin they made the "Handkerchief Rifle" and the "Handkerchief to Snake" effect. An interesting point regarding the two Martinkas is that the Society of American Magicians,

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one of the most influential magical societies in the world, had its birth in the theatre attached to their workshop.

Professor NOBLE, besides being a professional magician, was a turner by trade. As a performer, he was poor, although he was the chief magician employed by Bland of Oxford Street. But Noble certainly understood magic and produced a number of tricks in which wood, ivory, and glass were the materials used. Amongst many delicate effects, he invented the "Ivory Egg", the "Multiplying Egg", and the "Hypnotized Wand".

J. ROGERS is still alive, though not enjoying the best of health owing to the fact that he was badly gassed during the war. At one time Rogers was on the staff of Hamley's, London, and later made a name amongst magicians as the producer of the finest feather flowers in Great Britain. He has also invented many ingenious and amusing tricks, including the "Bottle and Snake", the "Picture into Bird-Cage", and the "Multiplying Bouquet".

Jules VOISON of Paris was an inventor and manufacturer of amazing skill. Most of his work was done in wood, and many specimens of it are preserved as museum pieces, so beautiful are they. Voison worked under conditions of great hardship, living, sleeping, and working in a single room. His two best inventions were the "Pack of Cards Changing to a Bird", and the box changing a die into handkerchiefs.

Carl WILLMANN, of Hamburg, was for many years Germany's leading magical inventor and manufacturer. He was also author of some standard works on magic and published a magical journal. The "Improved Aga" (floating lady) and the "Bird-Producing Cage" were both his inventions. Willmann died early in 1935, but a son is carrying on the business.

Stanley WITCHER made his reputation as a magical mechanic when employed by Maskelyne & Devant Ltd. He had great ingenuity and the "Yogi Star" illusion, produced on the stage of the St. George's Hall, was his work. This was a second-sight effect, and in it wireless

THE MAGICAL INVENTORS

telephony was employed. He also turned his attention to commercial devices, and invented an electric lamp which appeared to burn without any wires attached to it. Witcher died in 1927 when just over fifty years old.

CHAPTER XIII

STAGE ILLUSIONS

At the present time perhaps the three first-class great illusionists are—Horace Goldin, Chefalo, and Howard Thurston—of international repute. I do not propose to suggest how many illusionists of the second class there are, or to mention any names, but I am sure that the number is small. This fact is rather surprising to anyone who thinks of the super-cinemas—growing in numbers nearly every week—who are always ready to welcome a good illusionist in their programme. The managers of these places know quite well that big illusions are beloved by their public, and that the ordinary conjuring performance is not wanted, for the simple reason that it cannot be seen by the whole audience. A magician who is thinking of trying to get an engagement for a card act in a super-cinema is advised not to waste his time. Perhaps the best way to convince such a man that he is working on the wrong lines would be to get him to take a seat at the back of one of these huge palaces of pleasure while a man went on the stage and held up a card. The magician would then be convinced that a card act in such a place would be almost equivalent to an act with postage stamps in an ordinary large drawing-room.

People who are out to be entertained do not want to have to strain their eyes to see what is going on, and this is where the illusionist comes in. His effects are large enough for any super-cinema. The illusionist does not forget that at one of these places the best seats are at some distance from the stage—just the reverse of the conditions at music-halls.

I am convinced that a good illusion will always be a

STAGE ILLUSIONS

popular item in any entertainment of this kind, but I suggest that an illusion for a super-cinema should be of a special class. The illusion must be self-contained and the effect must be straightforward, so that it can be understood and appreciated without the necessity of much explanatory patter. It is up to the illusionists of to-day to provide the entertainments that modern audiences require, and the magician who bears these in mind will soon find that his date-book has a very pleasing appearance, equalled only by that of his bank pass-book !

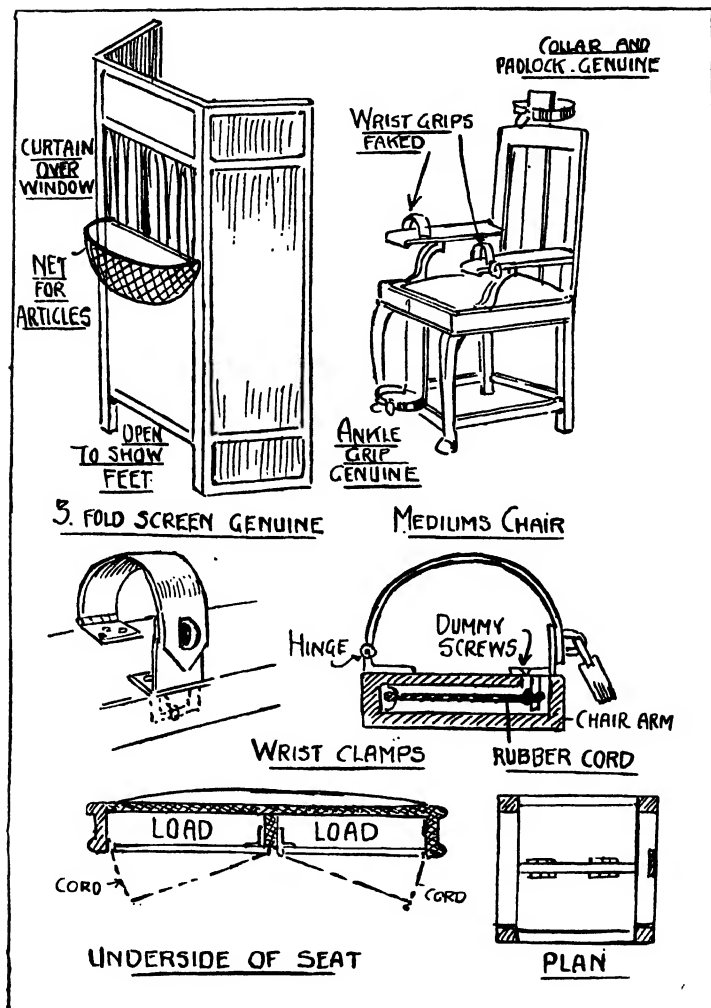
A TRICK SÉANCE

The performer explains to the audience that a spiritualistic séance is usually given in the dark ; he proposes to give an imitation of one in full light. He calls attention to a chair to which he is going to be securely bound. A committee from the audience come on the stage and examine the collar which is to fasten the performer's neck to the back of the chair, the grips on the arms of the chair for his wrists, and those on the two front legs for his ankles. The padlocks which are to be used can also be examined.

The performer takes his position in the chair and, with the aid of an assistant and under the supervision of the committee from the audience, he is bound to the chair. It is obvious that he cannot move, for his neck is locked to the back of the chair, his wrists to the arms, and his legs to the two front legs of the chair.

An assistant places a light stand with a curtain in front of it in front of the chair, and calls attention to the fact that the audience have a view of the performer's feet all the time. Yet, in a moment, a number of articles, some of them bulky, are pushed through the curtain of the screen and fall into a net in front of it. At the conclusion of the séance the screen is removed, and the committee and the audience see the performer still securely locked to the chair ; the locks can again be examined ; indeed,

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED



A TRICK SEANCE.

STAGE ILLUSIONS

the committee can retain the keys, if they wish, during the séance.

The secret is in the chair. It will be seen that the grips which pass round the wrists are really dummies. There is a strong rubber cord in the arms of the chair and so, although the performer appears to be padlocked to the arms, he can lift the fastening upwards and so release his hands.

The loads are concealed in the seat of the chair and, as will be seen from the diagrams, the performer has no difficulty in getting at the loads directly his hands are free. At the conclusion of the séance it is a simple matter to push the hands through the wrist-grips and everything then appears to be fair, square and above-board.

The rubber cords are very thick and do not yield to a light pressure.

SHOOTING AN ARROW THROUGH A GIRL

A study of the accompanying pictures will show the reader how this effect is produced.

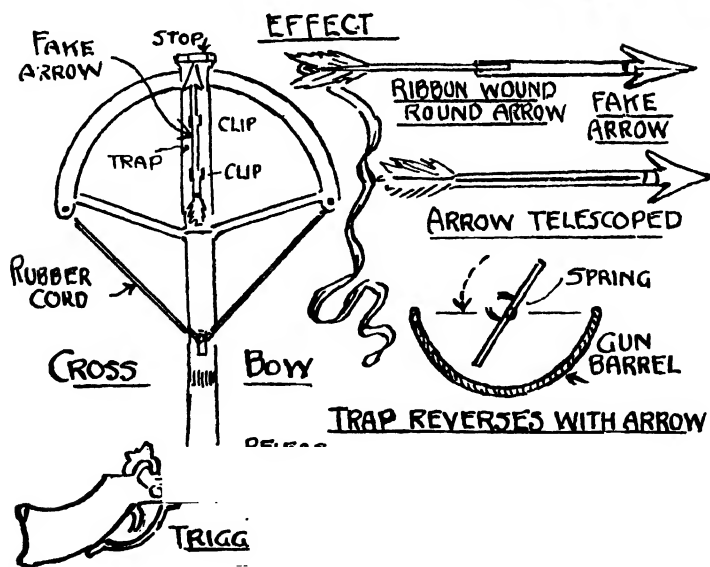
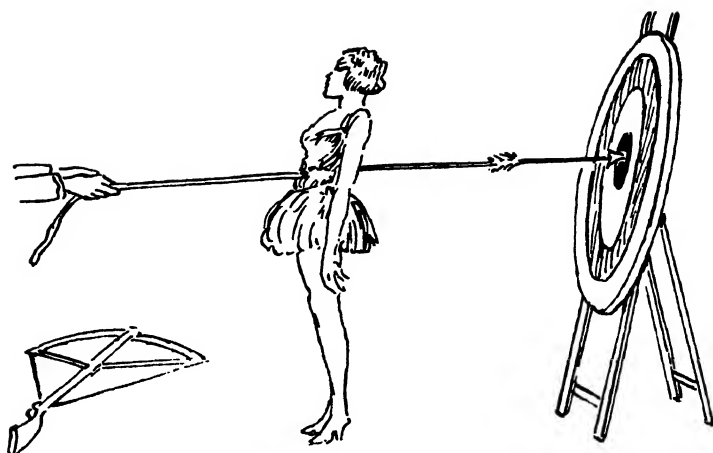
The performer loads his gun with an arrow and shoots at the girl.

The arrow has a long piece of ribbon wound round it and the audience see the ribbon hanging from the front of the girl's body, apparently passing through it, and the arrow on the target—a very convincing effect.

The arrow is collapsible and does not leave the gun. The girl is wearing a canvas tube with a flexible arrow in it. Directly the gun is fired the assistant pulls on a wire which draws the flexible arrow to the target with a piece of ribbon attached to it and at the same moment the girl throws out a roll of ribbon which was concealed in the front of the canvas tube.

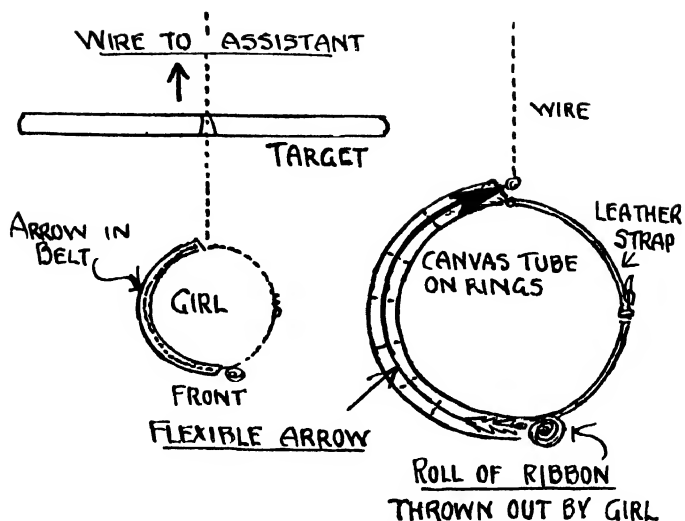
The illusion is perfect.

GREAT TRICKS REVEALED

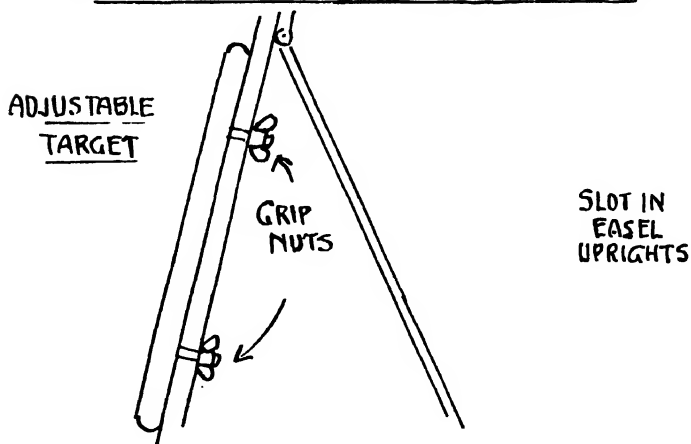


SHOOTING AN ARROW THROUGH A GIRL.

STAGE ILLUSIONS



HOW DUPLICATE ARROW "PIERCES" GIRLS BODY



SHOOTING AN ARROW THROUGH A GIRL.

CHAPTER XIV

BLACK ART ROUTINE

My reputation as a performing magician was founded on my specialization of the Black Art Mysteries.

Every magician worth his salt knows what the principle of Black Art is. Every magician worthy of the name has at some time utilized it, if only in the form of wells sunk in the conjurer's table. But I believe no magician except myself has used a complete vaudeville act of Black Art. I claimed, when I was working, that my act was unique ; and although many years have passed since I retired from the halls, that claim still holds good.

I did not invent the Black Art, as many of my acquaintances have supposed. The full credit for that must go to Beautier de Kolta, to whose inventive genius magicians owe so much.

Exactly in what way the inspiration came to de Kolta, I do not know. But I do know it was only after lengthy experiments that he decided on the use of black velvet. One of his earliest ideas was to use blue velvet, and although this colour was admirable in many ways for his purposes, he believed the possibilities of detection were too great to make it of real value in public performances.

Black velvet had none of the disadvantages of blue. The darker tones gave a great impression of depth to his stage ; there was a curious " smoky " effect of light from the black surface which heightened the general atmosphere of mystery. This effect is extremely difficult to describe ; it is not a sheen, nor is it a positive glow. I think in calling it a suspicion of luminosity I can convey its impression best, vague though this may be. Those

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who have witnessed an exhibition of Black Art will realize what I mean. And I should add, for the benefit of any who contemplate adopting the Black Art in any of its forms, that it is an effect which can only be obtained with the very best quality velvet.

At first, de Kolta used Black Art for incidental productions and vanishings of objects and persons. It is quite clear that he did not appreciate the wonderful possibilities of his idea. Black Art was not an end in itself, but a means to an end—just as a *servante* or an egg-vanisher might be. Later on, however, he elaborated his scheme, and actually did produce a number of effects which were purely and simply Black Art magic.

I say, with all modesty, that I was the first man to observe the fullest possibilities of Black Art. How de Kolta came to miss the idea of a complete act of Black Art magic has always been a mystery to me. Perhaps it was that there were so many possibilities open to him that he neglected the most obvious—he could not see the wood for the trees!

My first step in building a complete act was to construct a model stage. Without that model I certainly could not have perfected my plans, and I pass the idea on to any ambitious magician of the future. I aimed at a twenty-minute act, and I found that in this time I could accommodate twenty-one first-class effects.

Once launched, the success of my Black Art was instantaneous. It took my name to the top of the posters throughout the country, and made me a London "feature". Now, for the first time, I am divulging my secrets—not, I admit, without some slight pangs of regret. Still, the ideas are better passed on than taken to my grave. They are set down in full detail, with diagrams, for the use of any who fancy them.

The wonderful advantages of Black Art magic over any other type of magic must be obvious. In the first place, Black Art requires no patter. Indeed, patter is a distinct disadvantage to this type of act. Most conjurers who cannot patter invariably fly to a silent act of Oriental

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magic. There is nothing to be said against that, except that it has so often been done. Here, at any rate, is something that has not been overworked.

Again, no traps or mirrors are required in the Black Art. All you require is your theatre, technically termed a "fit-up", yourself, dressed preferably in white (I invariably wore white satin), and a well-schooled assistant.

I cannot over-emphasize the importance of carefully training the assistant. The whole show is dependent on him, and if he makes the slightest mistake, the act is ruined. If you are aiming at a high-class performance, you will need to give many hours to rehearsal and practice.

The assistant will have to work mainly to musical cues. Silence, except for a suitable orchestral piece, is essential throughout the act. The music should be selected with an eye to the length of your programme, and you should rehearse it until you are heartily sick of hearing it.

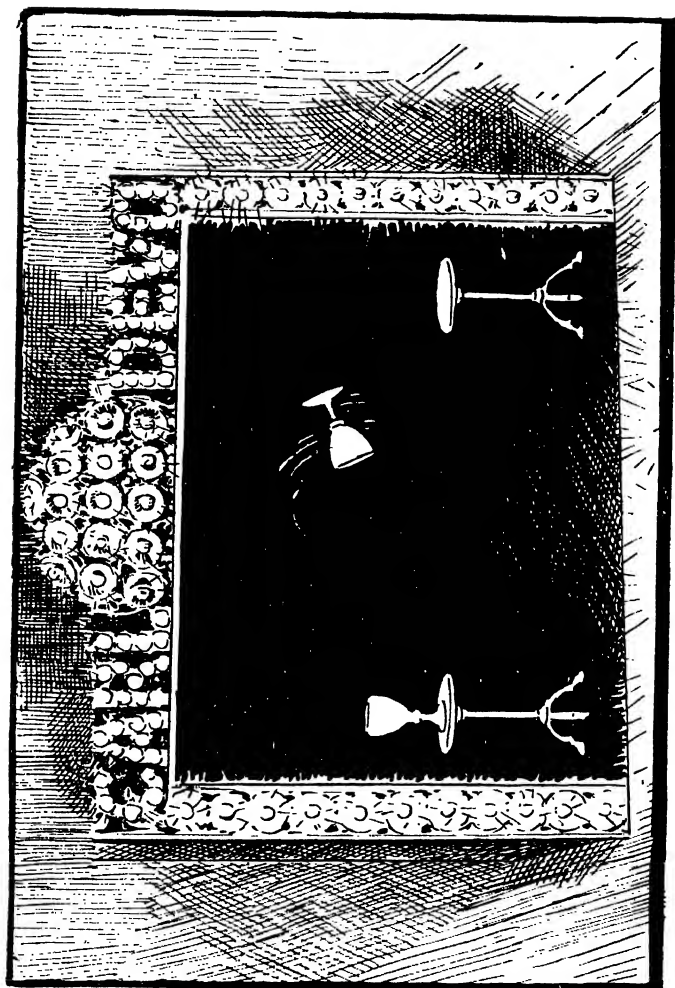
One further point. The Black Art Mysteries is an act for the showman. You will have to gesture magnificently if you are to obtain the fullest possibilities from this form of magic. Every gesture, every position of your body and your feet, must be thought out beforehand, must be of some significance.

A good assistant, well-timed musical cues, a showman—such are the essentials of the Black Art. Having said that, I need write no more. Read on and study the mysteries for yourself.

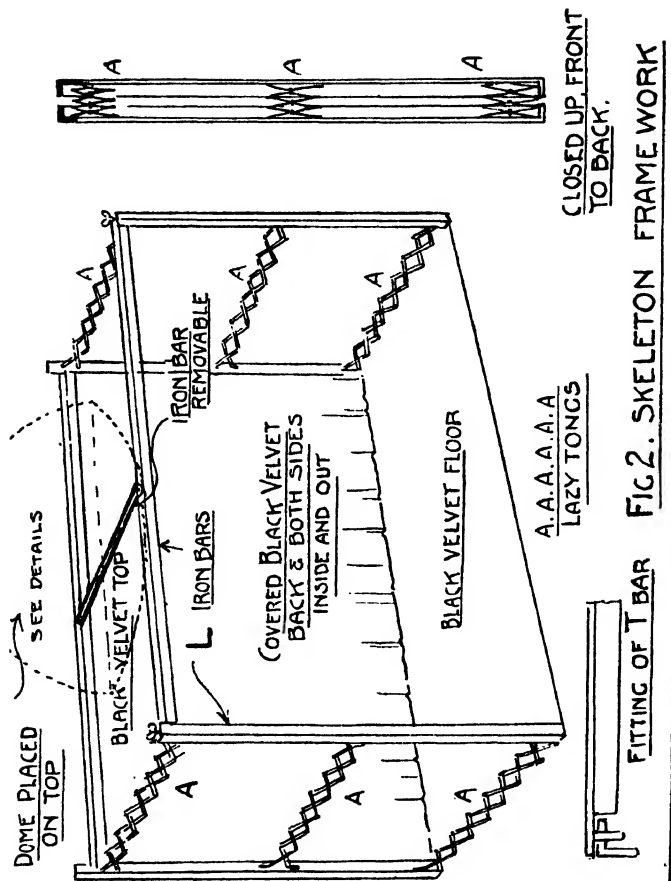
WILL GOLDSTON'S BLACK ART ROUTINE

I am now giving away for the first time the secrets and working of the Black Art Act which, under the name of Carl Devo, I presented on the halls many years ago. I remember that, at the time, some of my brother magicians paid me the compliment of trying to imitate my show, but I can truthfully say that none of them

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WILL GOLDSTON'S BLACK ART ROUTINE.



WILL GOLDSTON'S BLACK ART ROUTINE.

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succeeded, for I was always able to keep one or two essential details to myself. Now that I am going to explain everything connected with the act I hope that we shall see Black Art shows once more for, even though some people may give a rough guess about the way in which they are worked, the shows are still an entertainment—and that is all that a pleasure-seeking audience asks.

First, the appearance of the fit-up. The artist has drawn one effect in course of performance, and this picture gives the reader who may not be acquainted with some of the wonderful effects that can be produced by means of Black Art some idea of the subject.

The magician who is going to appear at a music-hall must be prepared to put up his show and take it down in a few minutes, and the reader will see that I never had any difficulty in doing this with my own show. By means of lazy tongs connecting the front frame with the back the whole fit-up could be closed or opened in a moment. If the reader will turn to Fig. 2 he will see the skeleton of the fit-up; the artist has drawn all the details correctly.

Perhaps I should here explain the principle of Black Art. If the reader happens to be a motorist and if he is accustomed to drive at night he will understand the principle immediately, for it is always being demonstrated to him. The motorist is blinded for a moment by the powerful headlights of a car coming towards him in pitch darkness; the motorist cannot see behind the lights; everything on the other side of them is black.

The magician who wishes to present a Black Art Act makes part of the stage dark by excluding all light and covering everything with black velvet. The whole of the interior of the fit-up is lined with black velvet—floor, roof, sides and back. Various articles and an assistant are also covered with black velvet.

The necessary lights—or “blindings”, to use the professional name for them—are there apparently for the purpose of decoration, but they answer their purpose,

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which is to prevent the audience from seeing clearly behind the light.

The artist has carefully drawn the reflectors and lamps of my fit-up. It will be seen that the dome at the top was really only half a dome and that it was in two pieces ; one fitted into the other. The " blinders " at the sides were very powerful lamps in strong reflectors. All the details are correctly drawn in Fig. 3.

Before explaining Fig. 4 I give a list of the various accessories used in the act.

Two round tables on pedestals with three legs at the base.

Two monster egg-cups.

One 24-inch wooden hoop.

An egg large enough to fit into the egg-cups.

A wand.

Two coils of white rope, one with a black hook at one end.

A half " shell " of the dummy of a girl ; the head was movable, so that it could be made to nod and make other natural movements.

Two black bags with wire ring on the top.

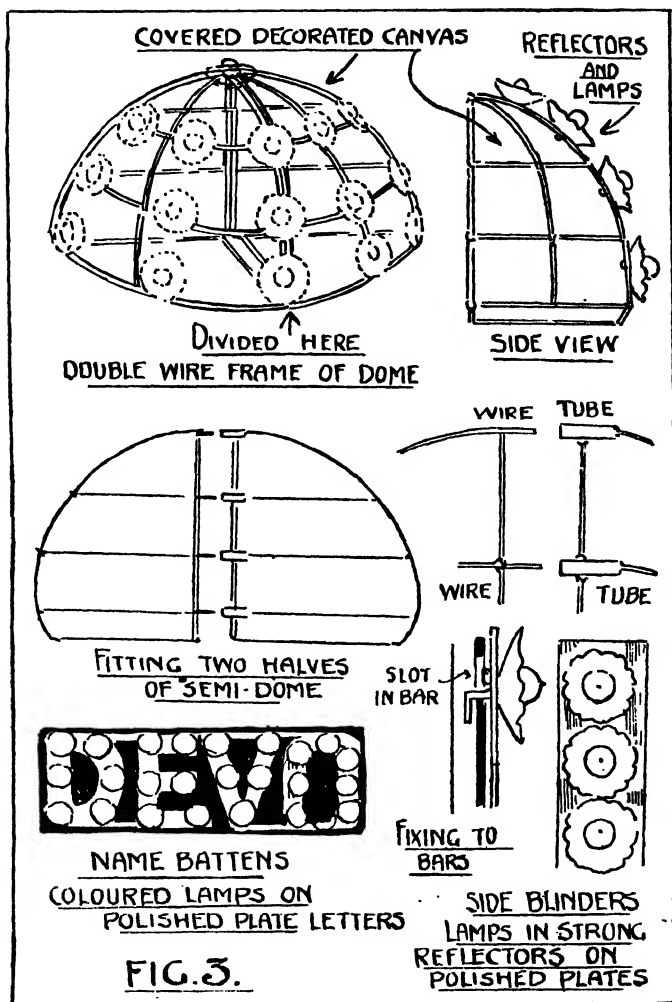
Black velvet coverings for every article.

An assistant in a black tightly fitting dress with a hood over his head ; the hood came down to his shoulders. Inside the hood was a domino. The portion of the hood which was cut away to allow the assistant to see was filled in with black gauze, and the assistant's eyelids were blackened. There was also a small opening, filled in with black gauze, at the mouth. The assistant had a small open bag in front of him, and in this bag were the wand and other small things required in the performance.

Now, if the reader will turn to Fig. 4 he will see how the " stage " was set for the performance. Fig. 5 gives all the details of the assistant's dress.

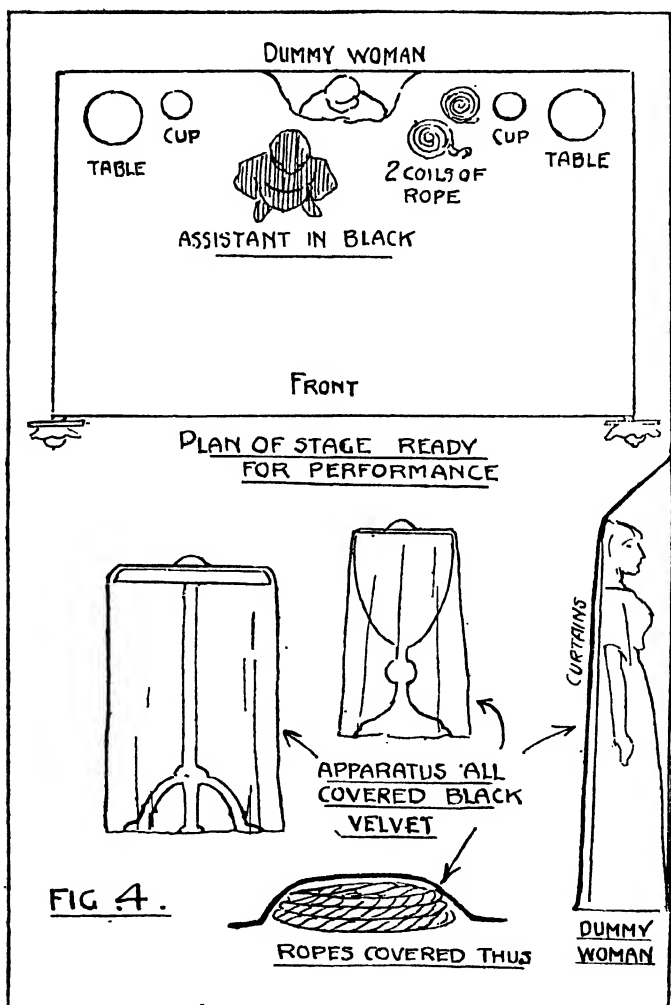
It will be understood that as the performer has the advantage of having an invisible assistant on the stage he can present some marvellous effects. My programme was on the following lines.

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WILL GOLDSTON'S BLACK ART ROUTINE.

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WILL GOLDSTON'S BLACK ART ROUTINE.

BLACK ART ROUTINE

First—my appearance. Sometimes I walked on from the wings and sometimes I appeared magically. The magical appearance was easily managed. I stood in the centre of the "stage" and was concealed by a large piece of black velvet; this went over the head and hung down at the back. Two rings were attached to the edge. The assistant, holding these rings, pulled down very quickly and I appeared in a white evening dress.

I held out my hand and a wand appeared, floating in mid-air; I beckoned to it and it travelled across to me in snake-like fashion until I was able to grasp it. This effect was easily managed by the assistant.

A wave of the wand and the two tables were produced. The tops of the tables were black, but the rim of each table was white.

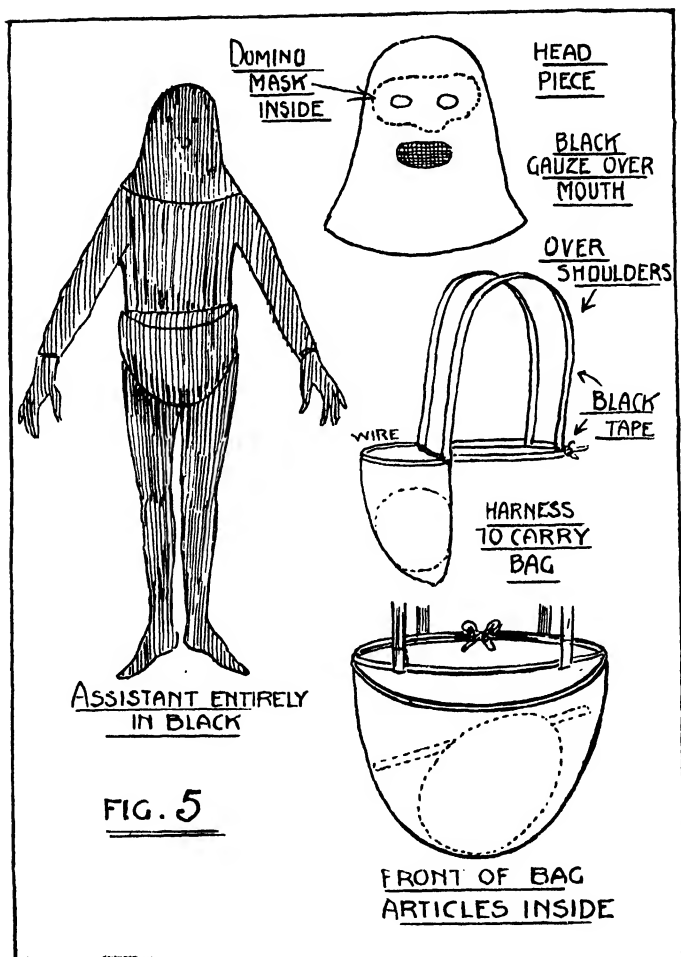
I picked up one of the tables, passed the wand all round it and, in putting it down again, swept the wand right across the top of the table. Immediately afterwards an egg-cup appeared on the table and travelled across to the other table. Once more I passed the wand all over the top of the table and a second egg-cup appeared.

Any movement I made with the second egg-cup was repeated by the other egg-cup acting, apparently, "on its own". Then I held out the wand and an egg-cup followed me up stage to the centre and remained suspended in mid-air. I then passed the solid hoop right across the egg-cup—an effect that was always well received; the reader, being now in the secret, will understand that the effect was very easy. The assistant held the cup in his left hand; when the hoop was almost against the cup the assistant put his right hand round through the hoop and then held the cup with that hand. The hoop was given to the audience for examination.

I then waved to the cup with the wand and it returned to the table.

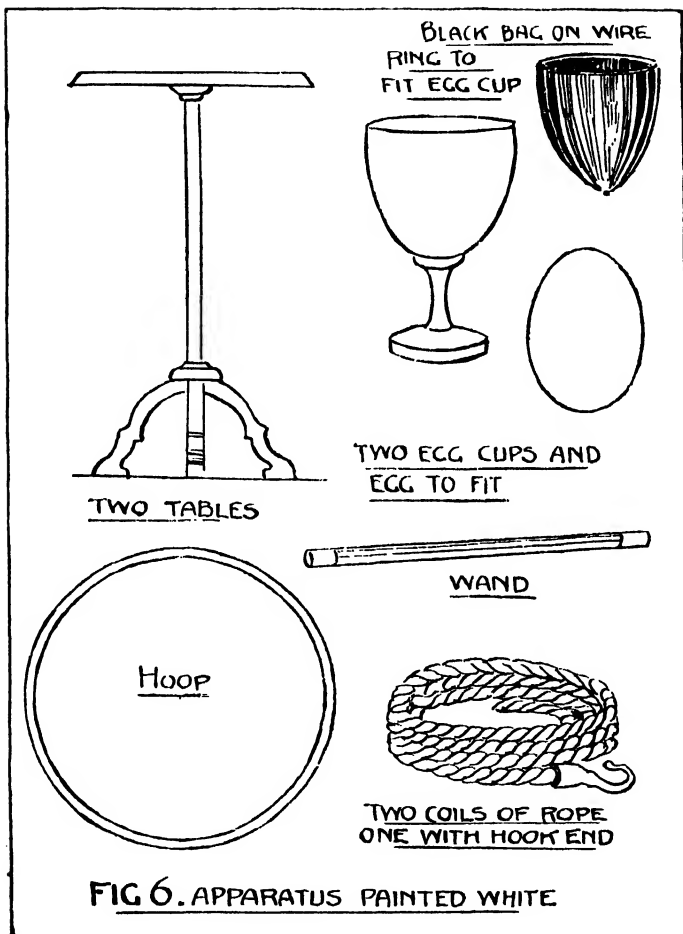
Going down to the audience I asked for the loan of a few small articles, such as watches, rings, etc. While I

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BLACK ART ROUTINE



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was doing this the assistant put one of the black bags into one of the cups ; when I returned to the stage I put the borrowed articles into this cup ; the assistant held the wire ring at the top of the bag and so I was able to pick up the cup at once and with a flourish in the air show the audience that all the articles had vanished. I waved my wand towards the other cup, stepped over to it and took out all the articles ; of course the assistant merely had to carry the black bag containing the articles over to the second cup.

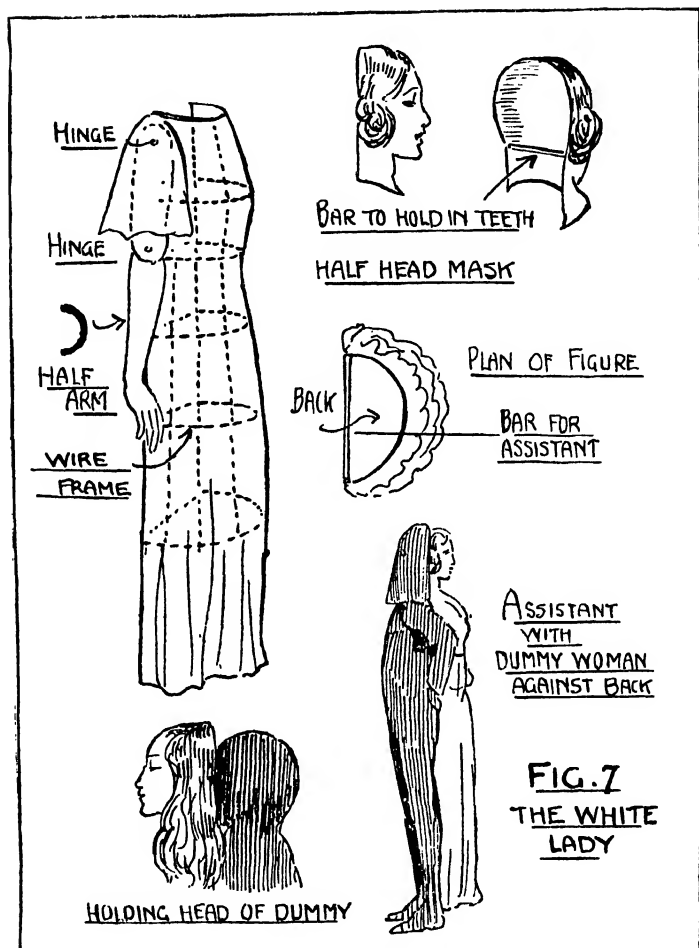
While I was returning the articles to their owners my assistant was getting ready for the appearance of " The White Lady " the dummy figure at the back of the stage. The assistant got into the half shell and then jumped round quickly ; the lady appeared to be produced from the air. Inside the head of the figure was a small bar which the assistant held in his teeth and so caused the head to move from side to side and nod. The movements of the dummy's arms were made by the assistant's hands.

Finally, I presented a version of the famous rope trick. The rope was made to appear magically ; the assistant snatched the black cover away. I threw up the rope and the hook engaged on the bar at the top of the stage. Then a boy, dressed in white, climbed up the rope and disappeared and, at the same moment, the rope appeared to fall down on the stage.

The effect was easily managed. At the right time a heavily weighted black cloth fell down in front of the boy on the rope. The illustration shows how the cloth was folded and kept in place by a thread and released instantly. At the same time the assistant picked up the other coil of rope and allowed it to fall from the black cover on the stage ; the illusion was perfect.

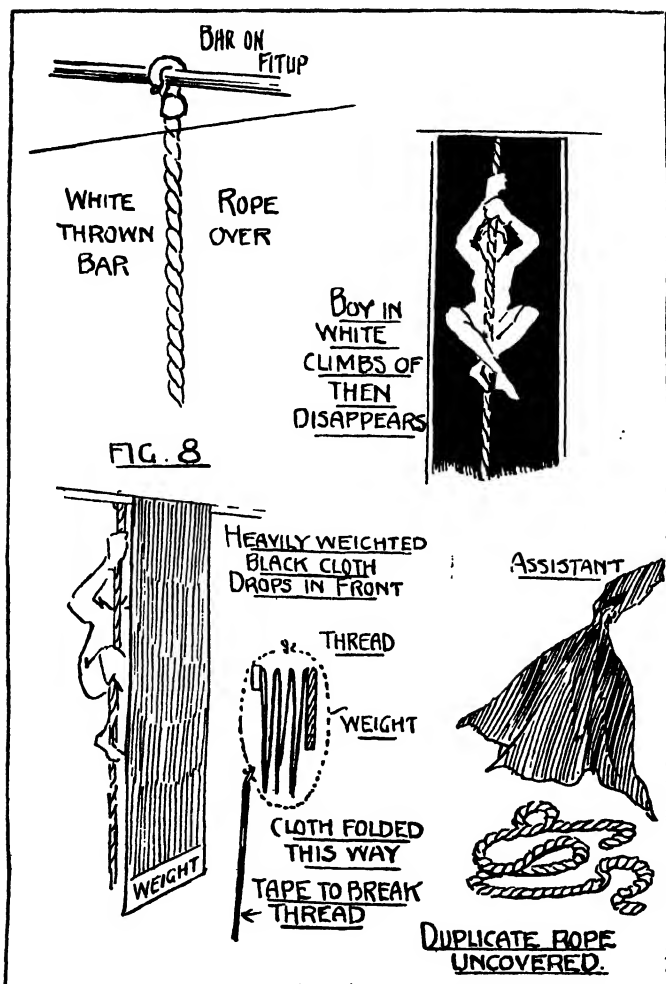
Of course a number of other effects could have been produced, but these were sufficient for my purpose. Although the explanations show that the working of each effect was very simple I can assure the reader that the audiences, knowing nothing about Black Art, regarded

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WILL GOLDSTON'S BLACK ART ROUTINE.

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WILL GOLDSTON'S BLACK ART ROUTINE.

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the act as real magic and were always very appreciative. I am quite confident that any performer who decides to put on a good act of this kind will soon find himself well rewarded for his enterprise.

CHAPTER XV

THESE MEN MADE MYSTERY

As I look backwards through a lifetime of magical endeavour, a dozen illustrious figures arise, and parade themselves ghost-like on the screen of memory. . . .

Houdini, Kellar, de Kolta, Zancig, Bertram, John Nevil Maskelyne, Lafayette, Carl Hertz, Chung Ling Soo, Paul Cinquavalli—I knew them all. Oft-times I helped them through difficulty: invented for them, built their illusion and their programmes, plotted their success. These were the men who made magic the best paying game in vaudeville, each in his own way a genius, each a giant of the “boards”, drawing a giant’s pay-roll.

And there was one so immense in personality, so certain in his control of public imagination, that he stood head and shoulders from the rest. His name was Houdini.

Houdini, whose real name was Erich Weiss, has been dead for more than eight years now, but the magic of his character remains. He is a true immortal. Even those of the younger generation who never witnessed his amazing performances know of him and his achievements. The son of an impecunious rabbi, he became in turn a newspaper-seller, a tie-cutter, a pedlar of patent medicines, a contortionist and trapeze worker, an actor, and a magician in a “dime museum” before he climbed to the uppermost heights of the magical profession, drawing £900 a week at the London Palladium, and 7,000 dollars a week in the United States.

In the long history of magic, there is no story that can compare with Houdini’s. Yet, strange as it may seem, it was not magical genius that immortalized his name. Houdini had no genius for magic in the strictest

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sense of the word. He was, of course, a superb escape artist, but there have been others—there are others—as good. No, it was the directness of his mind, his truly dynamic energy, coupled with a genius for showmanship that has never been equalled, that made him the name of names in vaudeville throughout the world. Houdini was the man who dramatized magic—and when I say that, I summarize his personality and his performances.

There is not space here to tell of his earliest struggles, of his ten years' fight against poverty and all manner of adverse circumstance. The first real opportunity came to him in 1898, when he was working in a "dime museum", doing ten or fifteen shows a day for twenty dollars a week.

By chance, a prominent booking agent happened to see his show, and, favourably impressed, offered Houdini a week's trial in a good-class vaudeville theatre. Harry was astounded at the suggestion, but with characteristic audacity demanded a hundred dollars a week. After some argument, he agreed to accept sixty.

But his troubles were not yet over. Two hundred miles separated him from St. Paul, where the theatre was situated, and he had no money to pay his fare. He approached the local stationmaster with the proposal that he should "travel on his luggage"—meaning that his trunks should be held as security against his fare. The offer was unsympathetically refused.

But Houdini was determined the train should not depart without him. He threatened suicide, but to no effect. At length, in desperation, he walked along the permanent way and flung himself on the rails, declaring he would not move until he was allowed to board the train. The unusual spectacle attracted a crowd of curious onlookers.

Years afterwards, when telling me of this adventure, Houdini remarked: "That was the first time I realized the public wanted *drama*. Give 'em a hint of danger, perhaps of death—and you'll have 'em packing in to see you!"

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And he was not slow to take advantage of this, his first understanding of mass psychology. Without moving, he explained the nature of his troubles, and a guard on the train agreed to pay his fare—providing repayment was made within a week. Harry promised—and kept his promise, as he invariably did. From that moment he may be said to have started his long climb towards success.

Houdini has been described as a man of complete fearlessness. This is not true, for had he never known fear, he would undoubtedly have died many years before he did. He had, nevertheless, an immense physical courage, and it was this that impelled him to take chances which would have scared, and probably killed, any lesser man. As it was, there were at least half a dozen occasions when death all but gripped and held him. He often told me that in his pessimistic moments he lived again all the dread and horror of his under-ice escape in the River Weser, Germany, in 1908.

On that occasion, Houdini could scarcely have realized the immense odds piled up against him. He undertook to plunge manacled into the river, release himself under the ice, and return to the surface in half a minute.

A hole was made in the ice, and he plunged in. The release from the manacles was a matter of only a few seconds—but beneath the frozen surface a strong current was running. Houdini turned to swim back to the hole. He could not see it—and every moment was taking him farther and farther from it. "I thought it was the end," he said. "I kicked my arms and legs as if all the devils in hell were at my heels." Sheer will-power pulled him through; after what seemed an eternity, he saw a white blur in the gloomy roof above his head. It was the ice-hole—and he reached it just in time, being in all little more than a minute in the water.

The story of an illusion called the "Levitated Fakir", which, in all its details has never been told before, throws an interesting searchlight on Houdini's enigmatic character. Twenty-six years ago, John Nevil Maskelyne,

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England's biggest "name" in magic, was sued for libel by Archdeacon Colley. Maskelyne had inferred that the archdeacon was party to a spiritualistic fraud, and, ever a fine showman, even went to the length of producing "spirit forms" on his stage at the St. George's Hall, London. Colley asked me to stand as an expert witness for him, but whilst I was considering the matter, I was served with a writ by a German magician for whom I had made some apparatus. One morning, Maskelyne asked me to visit him at his private flat above the St. George's Hall. There, he told me that the German plaintiff had asked him to appear as witness against me. He was willing not to do so if I would refuse to give evidence for Colley.

I was quite agreeable to this arrangement—for after all, both Maskelyne and I were magicians, with much the same interests at heart. Maskelyne's case was first on the lists; and, without my assistance, Archdeacon Colley was awarded considerable damages. When my case was heard, I was amazed to hear the name of John Nevil Maskelyne called as witness for the plaintiff. Damages to the value of £300 (one thousand five hundred dollars) were given against me. I swallowed my bitterness, and paid up.

Very shortly afterwards Harry Houdini made one of his frequent visits to England. I told him the complete history of the two cases, and he agreed that I had been somewhat scurvily treated. Harry never had any great love for Maskelyne, and at that time he was more than a little perturbed at the publicity Maskelyne was collecting from his celebrated "Box Escape" which rather clashed with his own "Escape from a Packing Case".

Whilst we were discussing matters in my office, a third magician drifted in and told us of an illusion called the "Levitated Fakir" on which Maskelyne was then working in complete secrecy: the effect was that an assistant in the costume of an Indian fakir stepped into a basket which rose from the stage and floated in mid-air.

"How's it done?" asked Harry.

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Our informant shook his head.

"I don't know," he said. "I'd like to."

"So would I," said I.

"So you shall," said Harry.

The following morning he walked into my office, and threw a packet of blue prints on my desk. "There you are, Will," he said. "The complete plans of Johnny's 'Fakir'."

I looked them through. As Harry said, the plans were complete to the smallest measurements and details. I asked him how he got them. He smiled feebly and gave no answer. And to this day I do not know how he came into possession of those prints. I do know, however, that he never went to bed the previous night. Whatever his methods, they were those of a master-mind. Any who knew John Nevil Maskelyne and the elaborate precautions he took to ensure secrecy will appreciate that. And perhaps the most astonishing thing about the whole business was that Maskelyne had no inkling that his plans had leaked out.

When, a few days later, I visited him, and spread the plans on his table, his eyes all but dropped from his head. He called me all the names he could lay his tongue to, and forthwith went to his workshop and scrapped the entire illusion.

And that is the whole story of why the "Levitated Fakir", one of the most brilliant effects invented by Maskelyne, has never been shown to the public.

One more story of Houdini before we leave him. Words cannot adequately express the true strength of Harry's character, the immense conviction and self-confidence that lay behind his every word and action. Believe it or not, by a simple trick, he once convinced a committee of expert examiners that he was capable of performing *miracles*!

Included in Harry's programme of straight magic was a trick called "Threading the Needles". In this, he took a length of thread from a cotton-reel, and apparently swallowed it. From a sealed packet, he then took a

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number of needles, placed them on his tongue, and likewise apparently swallowed them.

He would then drink a tumbler of water before pulling from his mouth a thread on which the needles were suspended. The trick called for skill and sound judgment, but the effect was extremely baffling.

Now, as I have hinted, Harry was exceedingly jealous of his growing reputation for exclusive magic. It so happened that "Threading the Needles" was being worked in the United States by a Chinese magician named Long Tack Sam, as well as by the famous Henry Rigoletto. Houdini determined to stop them using the trick, and to this end claimed the full performing rights. His claim came before Equity, who had the power to stop or permit the use of the trick by Long Tack Sam and Rigoletto.

Houdini promised to demonstrate before a committee appointed by Equity. Further, he audaciously claimed that he actually swallowed the thread and needles he placed in his mouth.

The trick is not, and never has been, worked by swallowing the thread and needles. Magicians, after all, are human beings, and to swallow half a dozen needles is but one fairly certain way of committing suicide.

Harry must have known that if it came down to "cases", his outrageous statement could never be substantiated. But he was careful to explain that the thread and needles merely lodged in his gullet, and that he could regurgitate them at will.

It is a fact not generally known that Houdini had remarkable powers of regurgitation. I have often seen him swallow a chestnut or a toffee ball; without discomfort he could lodge any such small, hard object against his Adam's apple, and bring it into his mouth by a contraction of his throat. He acquired this power by sheer practice, in much the same way as he taught himself to pick up small objects with his toes.

Houdini never demonstrated the trick before the Equity Committee at all. He had never intended to. What he did was to swallow and regurgitate a toffee ball, and

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it was sufficient to win his case for him. One presumes that the Committee were satisfied that he could do the same with loose thread and needles—and, mark you, they were experts! From that time until his death in October, 1926, he retained the sole performing rights of "Threading the Needles" throughout the United States.

Although Maskelyne, the Englishman, was a very different type from Houdini, they had one outstanding characteristic in common. Both were superb showmen. And Maskelyne, like Houdini, started in a humble way. He was a watchmaker, living in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, when he first became attracted to magic through watching a spoof "séance" conducted by the famous Americans, the Davenport Brothers. A curtain covering a window in the theatre slipped and Maskelyne was able to follow the movements of the two operators as they freed themselves from their ropes and produced various "spirit" effects.

From that moment, Maskelyne's main interest was magic. He did so well with various small tricks of his own invention that he decided to become a professional illusionist. He eventually came to London, and there, through his performances at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, and later, at the St. George's Hall, made himself world-famous. Many of his effects were highly ingenious pieces of mechanism—notably "Psycho", a card-playing automaton that beat any members of the audience in a round of whist.

But Maskelyne's most famous illusion was his "Box Escape". Incidentally, the effect was not his own invention. He first saw it performed by two sailors on the sands at Clacton-on-Sea. After closely examining the box, he straightway offered the sailors £10 for the apparatus, providing they would grant him the performing rights.

Maskelyne invested soundly when he purchased his "Box Escape" for £10. Although the escape was effected by mechanical means, it completely defied detection. Only an expert magician could have discovered the secret of

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the box—and the Old Man of St. George's Hall was wise enough to see that no really expert magician got near it.

The escape served him well for a considerable time. It packed his theatre for him, and must have brought him in many thousands of pounds. Incidentally, it cost him thousands, too—though these were never a real loss to him. They were expended in litigation costs, and the publicity that came to him as a result of his law case packed his theatre for many months on end.

To put the matter briefly, Maskelyne offered £500 to any person or persons who could discover the secret of the "Box Escape". Two young magical mechanics said they had done so, a claim which Maskelyne refuted. A law case ensued, and Maskelyne lost the verdict. He went to the Court of Appeal. Again he lost. Finally, he went to the House of Lords, which, in Britain, is the ultimate appeal court in civil cases. For a third time he lost.

Now the amazing thing about this case is that *Maskelyne was right*. The two claimants had not discovered the secret of the box, and for a very substantial reason, as I shall disclose. It is true that by the method which they said Maskelyne used, an escape similar in detail to Maskelyne's could be effected. Maskelyne denied he used the method they described—but completely destroyed his case by refusing to disclose his way of working the trick.

To all appearances, the escape was the same that Maskelyne had been using for some years previously. After an assistant had taken his place in the box, it was locked, roped, and placed in a cabinet. Doors of the cabinet were drawn, and in a matter of seconds the assistant made his escape.

Not long after the House of Lords had refused Maskelyne's appeal, I called on him, and we fell to discussing the case. He protested, quite sincerely, that he was right and the claimants wrong. "You can examine the Box if you wish," he said.

"I would sooner examine your cabinet," I answered. He smiled at that.

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"Give me your word," he said, "that you will not disclose my secret while I am alive."

I agreed, and he explained to me how a second assistant was concealed in the cabinet. The box used was not a trick box in any sense of the word, for the release was effected by the concealed assistant who unlocked the box and pulled aside the ropes. There was a twofold reason why Maskelyne refused to disclose these facts—firstly, as I have said, the publicity value of the litigation was considerable; and secondly, he feared a disclosure might damage his reputation as a skilled illusionist. "It's too easy a 'swindle'," were his words to me. "The public might never forgive me. Besides, it wouldn't do for 'em to know I substituted this new box at the time of the challenge."

He was right. It would never have done.

To the very end, Maskelyne proved himself a showman. He gave orders that at his death the box was to be destroyed, and this, I believe, was done. At any rate, a few years later, Captain Clive Maskelyne (John Nevil's grandson) asked me if I could construct a really undetectable box escape! He assured me he had never learned the secret of his grandfather's celebrated illusion.

In the early 'seventies the late J. N. Maskelyne, the founder of the famous entertainment which bore his name, was commanded to give a performance at Sandringham.

One of the items in the programme was a dark séance in which the feats of bogus spiritualists were performed. All went well for a time, but the entertainment was stopped abruptly by a cry from the Princess of Wales. Under cover of the darkness a mysterious hand had gripped Her Royal Highness's ankle, and she demanded that the lights should be turned up. The rest of the entertainment was given in full light.

Mr. Maskelyne always chuckled when he told this story to his friends. Suspicion, he used to say, fell on a man sitting not far from the Princess, "but I knew better. I'm certain it was my own pianist, a young devil who was up to anything—but I didn't ask any questions."

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One is not surprised that when Mr. Maskelyne was leaving, the Prince and Princess said they would be glad to have another entertainment, "but no dark séance, please".

* * * * *

Another little mishap occurred at the same performance. Mr. Maskelyne used to perform a very puzzling feat with a borrowed coat. He would put on the coat and have the buttons firmly tied with tapes to the button-holes by a member of the audience. Then the lights were turned down for a moment and up again and Mr. Maskelyne was seen without the coat and the coat was some distance away from him; he used to throw it. At this performance he misjudged the distance and when the lights were turned up he saw, to his dismay, that he had thrown the coat over the head of the Prince of Wales, who good-naturedly laughed at the magician's mistake.

All except the youngest men and women on both sides of the Atlantic will remember the Great Lafayette. He is outstanding amongst magical personalities for many reasons. He had, for example, practically no magical ability. The simplest sleights defeated him. Yet he was the first magician to make really "big money" in magic—it is doubtful if Harry Houdini would ever have earned such enormous fees had not Lafayette paved the way for him. Lafayette's show was a sort of magical circus: it included brass bands, dogs, cats, and horses, to say nothing of the lions amongst which he performed. There had never been another act like it.

A further point about Lafayette is that he was definitely "eccentric".

His real name was Siegmund Neuberger, and he started life as a scenic painter. Through his work in the theatre, he realized the possibilities of magic, and eventually decided to become a professional magician. Horace Goldin, who is probably the highest-paid magician in the world to-day, built him his first illusion. For some years he remained a comparative nonentity in the United States—before he came to England with his production of

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"Two Children from a Tube". He appeared at the London Hippodrome with this amazing illusion, and at once made himself famous.

Lafayette is not, of course, the only magician who has made his reputation on a single trick. In the child production, he appeared in a long flowing robe, carrying a cylinder open at both ends, which he showed to be empty. He set the cylinder on the ground at his feet (the London Hippodrome was at that time a circus), raised it, and disclosed a little girl. In a similar way, he produced a little boy. The trick was a sensation, all the more so because there were obviously no traps to help him. Actually, one side of the cylinder was made to open and shut, and the children were carried suspended to a belt beneath his cloak.

As soon as he had established himself as a front rank magician, Lafayette's eccentricity became manifest. It is possible—indeed, probable—that the huge salaries he earned turned his mind. It was a habit of his to carry about with him hundreds of adhesive labels bearing the words, "You must see the Great Lafayette", or some similar slogan, and he would plaster these over the doors and walls of public-places and wash-houses. Again, he was a great believer in what he termed "discipline". His assistants wore military uniform; they were drilled in approved military style, and had to salute him if they passed him in the street.

But it was in his attitude to his dog that Lafayette's unbalanced mind was most apparent. "Beauty", as he called the unfortunate creature, was presented to him when a puppy by Harry Houdini. In the course of a few months, he became so attached to the mongrel that it was nothing more or less than an obsession.

I recollect dining one evening with Lafayette at his house in Tavistock Square, London. Above the front-door bell-push was a large metal plaque bearing a likeness of Beauty and the words: "The more I see of men, the more I love my dog." Although I had some idea of Lafayette's esteem for Beauty, I was scarcely prepared

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for what happened at dinner. A butler entered and tucked a serviette in the dog's diamond-encrusted collar. He set a soup-plate before it, filled the plate with a ladle, and then proceeded to serve me, and finally, my host.

So, through every course—entrée, joint, and sweets—we were served in that order—and it struck me that Beauty had rather better food than either Lafayette or myself. When the meal was finished, my host took me to inspect Beauty's private bathroom, which he had constructed at a cost of £150. I have never seen a cleaner or better appointed room.

Every room in the house contained at least half a dozen photographs of the dog. Incidentally, this mania for reproducing the animal's likeness extended even to Lafayette's cheque-books and theatrical contracts. "Without Beauty," he once said to me, "life would be empty. I should be a failure; I could not carry on; I believe I should die."

I sometimes wonder if it was coincidence that within a week of Beauty's death, Lafayette himself was dead. They lie together now, dog and master, in the same grave at Edinburgh.

But for all his eccentricities, the magical profession owes Lafayette a considerable debt. Before his time, £30 a week was a good salary, even for a first-class illusionist. Occasionally salaries of £60 (300 dollars) were paid, but only really outstanding men of the class of de Kolta could command such figures. Five hundred dollars a week (£100) was quite unknown.

Lafayette set a new fashion in magical entertainment with his circus turns, and such was the demand for him that he could almost dictate his own price. And the salaries of other magicians rose with his.

He possessed immense confidence in his judgment and ability to give the public what they wanted—a confidence that was always justified. Throughout his career as a magician, Lafayette never produced a single failure. Once, when he was approached to appear at the Holborn

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Empire, London, he said he would do so if he had a fortnight's engagement at a fee of £1,500. The management were prepared to pay him £1,000, and no more.

Lafayette, who was anxious to have the engagement, thereupon proposed that he should take over the theatre himself for a fortnight, paying the management a fixed sum. Such a thing, although fairly common in modern vaudeville, was not known before this. An agreement was reached, and Lafayette proceeded to pack the Holborn Empire to capacity. As a result of the experiment, he made a profit of £1,640.

In spite of what he did for the profession, Lafayette was heartily disliked by his fellow-magicians. He has been described as the most hated magician who ever lived, and, sweeping as this statement may seem, it cannot be far removed from the truth.

To most other magicians, Lafayette was aggressively unsociable. For all but the select few—such as Houdini, Goldin, and Maskelyne—he pretended an utter contempt. I say "pretended" for it is my opinion that he found his lack of magical skill an embarrassment in the company of experts. Only on one occasion did I see him lose his temper. An inexperienced young man rashly criticized the appearance of the dog, Beauty. Lafayette rose from his chair, picked the young man up by his collar and the seat of his trousers, and flung him down a flight of stairs.

Not many people knew the truth of Lafayette's death in the fire at the Empire Theatre, Edinburgh, on May 9, 1911. The English newspapers published a touching story of how the great magician, having made his way safely from the burning building, returned to rescue his black horse, and so lost his life.

The fact is that Lafayette was killed because he deliberately defied one of the Lord Chamberlain's rules regarding theatrical performances. He insisted that the pass-door (i.e. the door leading from the stage to the stalls) should be kept locked—"in order to keep out interlopers" he said. During the performance one of the flimsy hang-

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ings on the stage caught alight—how it was never discovered. Lafayette ran to the pass-door to make his escape—and remembered too late that it was locked. He ran back across the stage, but before he could reach the wings he fell, suffocated by smoke. The flames did the rest.

Carl Hertz will always be remembered for his trick known as the "Vanishing Bird-Cage".

At one time, he claimed to be the originator of this trick. I went to some pains to prove to him and to the world that de Kolta, who produced the amazing "Expanding Die" illusion, was the inventor of the "Vanishing Bird-Cage". To Carl's eternal credit, he never bore me any ill-will over that matter, and after I had helped him through an exacting performance before a select Committee of the British House of Commons, he declared I was the best friend he ever had!

Hertz was a peculiar man, a sort of overgrown school-boy in his ostentation and self-advertisement, yet possessing a remarkably acute and perceptive brain in business matters. He was one of the first men to appreciate the possibilities of the cinema. He incorporated a projector in his programmes, and his exhibition was the first large-scale film show to be seen in Australia. In Colombo, as no theatre suitable for films was available for him, he had one constructed of wood by native workmen, and after playing in it for six weeks, cleared up a small fortune. The total cost of constructing and demolishing the theatre was less than £2!

Those who did not know Hertz personally may find it difficult to believe that he was a poor magician. Yet that is the truth—in spite of the fact that he made well over 1,000,000 dollars from magic. He never compared to such as Houdini, Lafayette, and Maskelyne. He was, of course, a wonderful showman, and performed his two best tricks—the "Bird-Cage" and the "Vanishing Lady"—most expertly. He spent many, many months practising these—both of which, incidentally, he "borrowed" from de Kolta.

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In one sense, success came to him too easily. He believed it was possible to imitate other magicians, and by his superior powers of showmanship, establish an ascendancy over them. This policy was certainly effective in the case of de Kolta and similar illusionists of the old school. But it failed completely with the arrival of Houdini and Goldin in the early part of the present century. When Hertz attempted to imitate Goldin's performance at the Palace Theatre, London, in 1902, he made the greatest mistake of his career. He lost the respect of the public and the profession, and within a year or two was appearing at second-rate music-halls throughout Europe.

Only the "Vanishing Bird-Cage" enabled him to keep going, and not long before his death, a queer streak of luck brought about a temporary revival in his fortunes in Britain.

A Bill was being passed through Parliament to restrict the appearance of animals in public performances. Part of the propaganda that had resulted in the introduction of the Bill in the House of Commons had been a public attack on Hertz and his "Vanishing Bird-Cage". An official of the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals declared that the canaries used in the trick were often maimed and sometimes killed.

Now this statement was perfectly correct, although Carl had no alternative but to deny it. As a matter of fact, the lightning vanish was effected by a mechanical collapse of the cage between the performer's fingers, and it was largely a question of luck whether the bird in the cage was uninjured or not.

A select Committee was appointed to debate the provisions of the Bill, and to advise Parliament of its findings. Before the Committee, the official of the R.S.P.C.A. demonstrated the Bird-Cage trick, and inadvertently liberated the canary. As a result of that demonstration, Hertz was invited to appear before the experts with his own apparatus. He came to me in a great flutter one morning, flourishing the letter he had received.

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"What am I to do?" he cried. "If I refuse, they'll guess the truth. If I go down to Parliament and injure the bird, it'll be the absolute end of me."

I agreed that it was a ticklish situation. After some discussion, I advised him to put on a bold face and accept. I told him I thought I could make him a cage that would not crush the bird in any way. He was anxious to know how this could be done. I sent him out there and then to purchase two lady's hair nets and a length of fishing line. With these and some thin strips of bamboo I made a cage that, when collapsed, enveloped the bird in the nets, and so protected it.

As luck would have it, we had a few days in which to develop a good publicity campaign. Carl interviewed pressmen, and openly scoffed at the R.S.P.C.A. demonstration of his trick. He said he used an entirely different method from de Kolta, though this, of course, was untrue. In every essential he used de Kolta's method, but the latter employed a round cage, and Hertz a square one. He made the most of this single point as though it were all the difference between cruelty and kindness.

As a result of all this, his name was on everyone's tongue, and his confidence grew. But when the fateful day arrived, he was as nervous as a child. "If it fails," he kept repeating, "I'm finished, I'm finished." I told him it would not fail, and I was quite positive that it would not if only he could keep his head.

I went down to see him perform the trick before the committee. His marvellous self-control in those few anxious moments when he held my cage between his fingers was a revelation to me. A flash—and the cage was gone: a few seconds, and the canary was produced from his pocket, quite uninjured and perkily interested in its surroundings.

Subsequently, Carl staged something of a "come-back" on the halls, though he had slipped too far ever again to be a top-liner.

Though Hertz and I had our differences, they never threatened our friendship to any serious degree. And I

must say of him that he was one of the most generous men I ever met. In this connection, I recall that not long before the outbreak of the Great War, he was crossing from New York to Southampton to fulfil a number of contracts he had secured in England. A gang of sharpers, attracted no doubt by Carl's diamonds, inveigled him in a poker game. Seeing that he was being sharpened, he manipulated the cards himself, and at the end of the evening he was 2,500 dollars to the good.

His identity was at length disclosed. One of the sharpers threatened trouble unless the losses were returned. Quite unperturbed, Carl invited the man to his cabin "to collect the money". They went instead to the captain's office. The outcome was that three dangerous sharpers were blacklisted on the shipping company's books, and when he landed, Carl sent a cheque for exactly 2,500 dollars to the Seamen's Orphanage.

During his lifetime, Hertz must have given away something in the neighbourhood of 200,000 dollars, quite apart from the 500,000 he lost in gambling ventures.

A magician quite as generous, though rather more prudent in his investments, was Chung Ling Soo. Soo's rise to fame in magic reads almost like a story from the pen of Grimm or Hans Andersen. In spite of his stage name, and the elaborate Chinese settings of his performances, he was actually a Scots-American named William Elsworth Robinson.

Although he was a magician, inventor, and magical mechanic of the highest class, he completely lacked the ability to patter. Because of this, he was a failure as a "straight" magician, both in America and Europe. Disappointed, he returned to New York, where he opened a second-hand bookshop. It seems to have occurred to him quite suddenly that he might perhaps succeed with a silent act where he had failed before. Accordingly, he built up an act on Chinese lines, called himself Chung Ling Soo, and was fortunate enough to obtain a week's trial booking at a Berlin theatre.

On the first night, disaster overtook him. In the

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middle of a trick, a bowl of gold-fish fell from its hiding-place beneath his gown, and smashed on the stage. The curtain was rung down. Soo was desperate and threatened suicide—this was his second failure. In his dressing-room, his manager found him beating his head on the iron heating-pipes. When he had calmed down, he somewhat reluctantly agreed to go to England and try his luck there.

At first, he did not set the Thames alight, as Englishmen say. Then he put over one of the most audacious pieces of bluff that has ever been perpetrated on the public. There was in London a magician named Chung Ling Foo (the similarity of name may or may not have been coincidence) who claimed to be the only genuine Chinese magician in the world. How far this claim was justified I do not know, though there is no doubt the Chung Ling Foo *was* a genuine Chinese.

William E. Robinson Chung Ling Soo issued a challenge to Chung Ling Foo, charging him to prove his nationality, failing which he was an impostor and a fraud. If Foo had taken up this challenge, probably nothing more would have been heard of Chung Ling Soo (who, incidentally, was claiming to be a genuine Chinese!). As it happened, Foo showed no interest. He drifted through his remaining contracts and left the country, to be speedily forgotten.

Meanwhile Soo made the most of his chances. His challenge had given him fine publicity, and he followed it up with some dazzling displays of magic that made his name famous throughout the world. For twenty years afterwards, he was one of the biggest magical attractions that ever came to England, his salary throughout that period averaging about £500 a week.

Soo's death was a tragedy. In performing a trick called "Catching the Bullets" at the Wood Green Empire, London, in March, 1918, he was shot in full view of the audience, and died almost immediately.

At the subsequent inquest, a verdict of accidental death was returned. On the face of it, the shooting was

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a pure accident, yet there were certain features of Soo's death that make one wonder if he had not deliberately planned the whole affair for his suicide.

Fantastic, perhaps! Yet the day before he was killed, Soo was a worried man. He came into my office to clear up certain outstanding business matters which were in no way urgent. Again, before his last performance Soo was seen to be handling the rifle used in the trick, and afterwards the rifle was found to be tampered with. Departing from his usual custom, Soo loaded that rifle himself instead of leaving it to an assistant. . . . Why?

One more point. Soo was supposed to catch the bullets on a plate held in front of his chest. Yet the bullet which killed him never shattered the plate, which it must have done had he held it in its usual position. Again, one asks . . . why?

But there—what is the use! Soo is dead, and magic is the poorer for his going. And all hope of discovering the real truth of the events on the March night seventeen years ago have gone with him.

Little more than a quarter of a century ago, Horace Goldin, the magician, was strolling by the fairgrounds of Coney Island. His attention was drawn to a tent bearing the name Julius Zancig. Apparently, this Zancig, who appeared to be a palmist of sorts, was having difficulty in collecting an audience. Presently, he stepped outside the tent, and, with a lady assistant, proceeded to give an exhibition of thought transference free of charge.

Goldin watched, and eventually followed the dapper little Zancig inside the tent. The subsequent exhibition of palmystry was poor stuff, and scarcely interested him. Yet he was excited, for he knew he had made a discovery. The thought transference performance, designed merely to collect a crowd, was the finest he had ever witnessed.

He spoke to Zancig, and said he would be pleased to help him in any way he could. He would mention his name to Hammerstein, the vaudeville magnate of the United States. Zancig smiled at that. He was just managing to knock up twenty-five bucks a week, and was

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certain Hammerstein wouldn't look at him. He was right. Hammerstein did not see him, but on Goldin's recommendation he offered Zancig a fortnight's engagement at the famous Roof Garden for the wellnigh incredible salary of sixty-five dollars a week.

Zancig was anxious to do well at the Roof Garden. He knew that Goldin had given him a great opportunity. Perhaps he was too anxious. The first night he was a complete failure. On the second night he likewise flopped. He was certain now that Hammerstein would cancel his contract, but by sheer good luck there was no other turn suitable to replace him in the programme.

As it was, he was still due to perform—but he was right at the bottom of the bill. When, on the third night, he appeared on the stage, most of the audience had gone, for it was nearing midnight. Somebody shouted to him: "Speak up, you!" He called back: "Would you mind coming a little closer, please?"

The long and short of it was that Zancig, with his wife and assistant, Agnes, occupied the stage for an hour and a quarter that night. Such audience as there was simply would not let them go. Hammerstein was amazed when Zancig said to him: "You see, we are 'close' workers—we need the audience packed in around us. And it is really very much better for us to be last on the bill, because when our time comes most of the traffic has stopped and people can hear what I'm saying."

So the Zancigs remained last on the Roof Garden bill, and the audience no longer departed before they came on. Hammerstein extended their contract for the whole of the summer season at an increasing salary. When the autumn came, their names were known throughout the United States: they were offered—and accepted—a vaudeville contract for several months at a guaranteed salary of £100 a week.

Those who saw the Zancigs at work might be justly forgiven for believing they were possessed of genuine psychic powers. That is what the late Lord Northcliffe, proprietor of the *Daily Mail*, believed when he saw them

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at the Alhambra Theatre, London. "This is no trickery," he exclaimed. "It is miracle working." But he was wrong, as Zancig himself admitted.

The apparent thought transference was worked by means of an ingenious and very complicated code of questioning. "What have I here?" Julius would ask off-handedly. Yet his words were carefully timed and chosen, and Agnes immediately knew the answer.

I once privately tested the Zancigs in my London office. Agnes sat in a chair with her back to Julius and myself. I wrote a simple and very common Hebrew word on a sheet of paper, and asked to be told what it was. Julius took one look at it, smiled, and handed it back.

"I can't do it," he said.

Nevertheless, in their public performances, the Zancigs were prepared for all emergencies. If Julius was handed an article which he could not accurately convey to Agnes, he would pass on quickly to other members of the audience. His actions like his words were most carefully rehearsed and timed. Frequently, he planted confederates in the audience—with results that were "miracles," as Lord Northcliffe said.

The untimely death of Agnes Zancig threatened to destroy the act. I remember Julius writing me a long eulogy of his wife at the time, and speaking of his retirement from public life. Some time afterwards, however, he married again, and his second wife, Ada, proved an apt and willing pupil.

It is true, I think, that the second partnership never quite attained the same proficiency and accuracy of the first. None the less, there existed between Julius and Ada Zancig a love, a sympathy and understanding, that enabled them in their work together to reach a very considerable degree of expertness. Julius always spoke of Ada in the warmest terms—and she had an intense respect and loyalty to the memory of his first wife, Agnes. After the death of Julius in 1929, in a letter to me, she wrote: "His wife, Agnes, must have been glad to welcome him to her side, after all the years of separation."

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I mention these facts because they had a definite influence on Julius Zancig's career. Shortly after his second marriage, there were rumours that he and Ada were out of sympathy, and that she had made his act third-rate. On the contrary, after a shaky start, her encouragement held him to his purpose, and enabled him to achieve a second success when failure seemed imminent.

The return visit of the Zancigs to Britain started badly. I think, perhaps, that Julius was too anxious to prove he was as good as he had always been. He arranged a press demonstration, and because of one or two minor failings in the show, he received a number of unflattering notices.

"We shan't stop here another week," he said despondently. "After those notices, we shan't get any decent bookings, and I'm certainly not going to take Ada on to the second-class halls."

"Why not give yourself another chance?" I asked. "I'll arrange another demonstration for you at the Magicians' Club."

"Will it work?" he said.

"It might do," I replied. "You've got nothing to lose, anyhow. I'll get all the newspaper men down. The rest is up to you."

So another private show was arranged, a show at which 800 guests were present, including representatives of all the leading British newspapers. A few minutes before the Zancigs were due to appear, a young reporter handed Julius a sealed envelope, and asked if Ada could repeat the word that was written on a card inside.

Julius took the envelope, examined it, then quickly shot a question at his wife. Without any hesitation, Ada spoke the word. I took the envelope, opened it, and withdrew the card.

"Correct," I said.

"Correct," agreed the reporter.

The subsequent stage show was a great success, for that little triumph had restored their confidence. How was it done? There is no harm in disclosing the fact that

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Julius had beneath his armpit a small sponge soaked in alcohol. He had quietly moistened the envelope with this, so making the paper transparent. Fortunately, the word was a simple English name that was covered in their code. That, of course, was pure luck—but then Julius Zancig always was a lucky man. As a result of the notices he received, he undertook vaudeville engagements that brought him in the better part of £5,000.

Apart from his professional success, Zancig had a keen business brain. At the 1924 Wembley Exhibition in England, he took a fortune-telling booth in the Fun Fair, and trained a number of attractive young ladies in the palmistry business. It was sheer hocus-pocus, but it brought him in nearly £200 a week. Each of the young ladies paid him a fixed amount for the use of his name—and some of them did so well that they were pocketing £100 a month.

Zancig spent only very little of the money he earned. In his early days he had known all the misery and desolation that extreme poverty can bring—he had been an iron-smelter—and it was his intention to set aside a large sum to keep him in luxurious retirement. He had all but achieved his object when death claimed him in 1929.

When I think of the gentle, fortunate, and sometimes heroic Zancig, I am often reminded of another—the immortal Paul Cinquavalli, one of the truest and kindest men it has been my fortune to befriend. Cinquavalli was not, of course, a magician like Houdini, nor a “mental” worker of Zancig’s type. He was a juggler—in my opinion, the finest juggler the world has ever seen.

Born of Russian parents, he started life as a trapeze artiste. When he fell and smashed his ankle in a circus—I think, in Moscow—it was the luckiest thing that ever happened to him. He was no longer able to take an ankle hold on his trapeze, and so, rather desperately, turned his attention to billiard balls and Indian clubs. He had a fine eye, and a flair for balance. His hands, though not large, were safe and sensitive. So he started over again, just as Zancig did.

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I never saw Paul make a mistake in his juggling. His "rain" of billiard balls was little short of a miracle. But perhaps his most famous tricks were the catching of a forty-pound cannon ball on his neck—a deviation of half an inch would have killed him ; the balance of two billiard balls, one on top of the other, on top of a cue ; and running a billiard ball up and down the length of a cue.

As a matter of fact, neither of these last were true balancing feats. One of the balls used in the cue-top balance had a side very slightly flattened. This side he placed on the tip of the cue. On top of the ball, he introduced—of course, unseen by the audience—a tiny disc of rubber with a hole in the centre. This was sufficient to grip the second ball when balanced. There is no denying the thing was something of a "swindle"—in that the feat was not all it appeared to be. None the less, the raising of the cues and balls, and the balance from the forehead, called for superfine judgment. Not one in a hundred modern jugglers could do it.

Paul used a special cue when he performed the billiard ball "run". This had a very fine groove cut down its entire length. To some extent, the ball running along the cue may be likened to a train on lines—the groove prevented the ball from slipping. But this, too, was a feat that would defy the skill of all but a true artiste.

Cinquavalli died in the manner he would have wished. He was playing his violin before a gathering of friends in his home at Brixton, London, when the bow slipped from his fingers, and he sank to the floor—dead.

It is nearly forty years since Alexander Herrmann died. But time has treated his memory well. To many of us he is still the Alexander the Great of the magical world.

He was born in Paris on February 11, 1844. Magic was in his blood, for his father, Samuel Herrmann, had always been devoted to the art, even, it is said, to the detriment of his career as a physician.

Samuel Herrmann's family was a very large one, eight daughters and eight sons. Alexander was the youngest of the sons. Carl, the eldest of them, became a successful

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magician early in life. Alexander, inspired by the example of father and brother, practised magic in his childhood, and was ambitious for the footlights before he reached his teens.

With this ambition he ran away from home, and joined Carl, who was then at the height of his fame. He stayed with him a while, was taken away and sent to school, and afterwards rejoined him.

Carl taught Alexander magic. It would have been difficult at that period to have found a better teacher. For Carl was the successful rival of Robert Houdin, Professor Anderson, and the other great contemporary magicians. He knew his art, and loved it; he knew his public, and loved them.

And soon this knowledge was Alexander's as well. By the time he reached his twenties he was a force in magic. He appeared at the Egyptian Hall, London, for a long period with conspicuous success. And touring in the States, in conjunction with Carl, he achieved a positive triumph. Carl had long been a popular favourite in America, and had made a considerable fortune there. This tour was his last one, for he had definitely decided to retire from the stage. At his farewell performance in New York he introduced Alexander to the American public as his legitimate successor.

In course of time Alexander eclipsed even the great popularity of Carl. He was Alexander the Great throughout the States. For more than twenty years he played to big money everywhere. His brother had made one fortune. He made several. But, alas! he lost them all in various theatrical speculations.

One writer describes Alexander as possessing "a wrist of steel and a palm of velvet", and another refers to his "nerve of iron". High praise the former for his sleight-of-hand; and high praise the latter for his showmanship. And both well deserved. For his sleight-of-hand and showmanship were alike brilliant.

And how the man enjoyed his career. He appreciated the money it brought him, but still more the applause and

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notoriety. And how well he played the part of magician. His Mephistophelian appearance helped him. He added to that an atmosphere of Oriental mystery and luxury in his private life and of glitter and audacity in his public doings.

It must be admitted that he contributed little of permanent value to the art of magic. He was an exponent rather than a creator. The "Gun Illusion", "Vanity Fair", "After the Ball", and the rest of his big successes were not original. Still, they owed much to his personality and methods of performance. His magical touch gave brave new life to many an old trick. And he was honest in his borrowings and adaptations. He was once asked what was in his opinion the greatest magical illusion ever presented. "Without a doubt, de Kolta's 'Vanishing Lady'," he replied. "And how sincerely we other magicians flatter him and it!"

Throughout the latter part of his career Alexander Herrmann was very ably assisted by his wife, Adelaide.

It has been said that the mention of Cagliostro always suggests the marvellous, the mysterious, the unknown. This is true; indeed, probably no other name in history has the same effect in the same degree; and certainly of all the magicians of the past Cagliostro ranks easily first in the popular estimation.

What manner of man was this Cagliostro? How does the record of his actual achievements as a magician justify his fame? Was he the miracle-worker of the stories that have been told and written of him? Or was he pure charlatan?

Charlatan, and only charlatan. But the greatest genius in charlatanism ever known.

He was born at Palermo on June 8, 1743. Joseph Balsamo, the proverbial child of poor but honest parents. Early in his teens he cast off the poverty and the honesty. Thenceforward his motto was: "The world is my oyster which I with fraud will open."

At first the frauds were of a petty character—little more than common thefts. But then his horizon broadened.

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The cause of this was a chance meeting at Messina with a certain Althotas.

Althotas was a travelling showman, who knew something of magic, and a good deal more of the weaknesses of human nature. All that he knew he taught Balsamo. And Balsamo assimilated the knowledge, and meditated how best it might profit him. And ideas that were mad, and yet at the same time full of method, came to him.

Count Cagliostro now. Balsamo dead ; Althotas dead. Cagliostro only alive ; and with an intense life and the spirit of conquest over “ the fifteen hundred millions—mostly fools ” flaming within him.

The mystery of masonry is a great mystery. Early in his career Cagliostro realized this, and upon it much of that career was based. He established a new order of Egyptian masonry. It was cleverly conceived, and as cleverly exploited. As the Grand Cophtha of the order, he obtained many followers and much wealth.

Side by side with this he practised magic. He knew something of the art, and had splendid gifts of showmanship. As a performer of tricks, with the usual frank admission of a magician that they were tricks, he would have earned an honest living. But that had no attractions for him. He sought great notoriety and great riches. His tricks were heralded by himself as miracles ; his claims as a worker of wonders were colossal. The secrets of the Philosopher’s Stone and the Elixir of Life—vaguely sought by the alchemists throughout the ages—had, he announced, been discovered by him. And thousands of people believed him, and accepted his fraudulent proofs as convincing.

It was in Paris, in the years 1785 and 1786, that Cagliostro, under the patronage of the famous Cardinal de Rohan, attained the zenith of his career. The Baroness d’Oberkirch wrote of him at that period as follows :—
“ No one can ever form the faintest idea of the fervour with which everybody pursued Cagliostro. He was surrounded, besieged ; everyone trying to win a glance or a word. . . . A dozen ladies of rank and two actresses had followed him

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in order to continue their treatment. . . . If I had not seen it I should never have imagined that a Prince of the Roman Church, a man in other respects intelligent and honourable, could so far let himself be imposed upon as to renounce his dignity, his free will, at the bidding of a sharper."

But the end of his career was near. First there was "The diamond Necklace" affair. He escaped conviction in connection with that; but it marked the beginning of his downfall. Soon he was in financial difficulties, and was discredited by his former friends. On the evening of December 27, 1789, the final blow fell. He was arrested by order of the Inquisition. After a prolonged trial he was sentenced as an enemy of the Catholic Church to perpetual imprisonment. All that is known of him thereafter is that he died in the fortress of San Leon towards the end of 1795.

Several great writers have contributed to the fame of Cagliostro. Dumas made him a principal character in several of his romances. So did Lord Lytton and George Sand. But another great writer got nearer to the truth. Carlyle, in the course of an essay on "The Diamond Necklace" affair, summed him up as "Count Front of Brass and Pinckbeckostrum".

A true description. Yet we magicians of the present day owe something to Cagliostro. He aroused all Europe to an enthusiasm for magic, and the beneficial effects of that enthusiasm are felt even now.

In this chapter I have recalled magic and the famous magicians I have known during my lifetime. But there is one branch of magic—if such it can be called—which has increasingly occupied my attention in recent years, and which I have not yet mentioned. It is the magic of the eastern fakirs.

The subject is vast and, to the untutored mind, inexplicable. And let me admit that I have seen phenomena produced by certain fakirs which have puzzled me considerably, and which were certainly not produced by methods known to "civilized" magicians.

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In 1926, a fakir named Dr. Tarah Bey visited London. He was an educated man, a doctor of medicine, and came to give a demonstration of his magical powers. He was able to stick pins in his flesh without inconvenience, and without causing blood to flow. He lay on a bed of nails with an anvil on his chest. After going into a self-induced cataleptic trance, he was placed in a coffin and covered with sand. The lid was placed on the coffin, and likewise covered with sand. Twenty minutes afterwards, the lid was taken from the coffin, and Tarah Bey, with a groan, recovered from his trance, and appeared none the worse for his burial. Afterwards, he gave an exhibition of thought-reading, and actually prophesied that a horse named Coronach would win the famous Epsom Derby. No doubt many racing tipsters did likewise—but it is a fact that *seven weeks later* Coronach won the Derby for Lord Woolavington.

All of this is typical fakir magic: let us consider it step by step. For his pin-sticking experiment Tarah Bey used fine, steel pins three inches or more in length. These he stuck into his cheeks, arms, and thighs. Now it is a fact that any healthy person can do these things with very little practice. I have stuck pins through my own cheeks and those of other people by merely pinching the skin of the cheek until it has become quite numb.

It is easier still to drive a pin into one's thigh. Try it for yourself by placing the pin on to the thigh and giving the head a *sharp* blow. There is no pain, only the faintest of pricks. It is essential, of course, that the pin be thoroughly clean. There will be little or no blood from the tiny wound, and if the pin is driven through clothing, it will be withdrawn perfectly clean.

It is not so easy to lay on a bed of nails, yet it is not impossible. A bed in which the nails are widely separated would be extremely painful to a white person. But the closer the nails are together, the easier it is to lay on it—because there are more nails in the bed, and consequently the support is greater.

Tarah Bey's burial experiment was interesting, but

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scarcely evidence of supernatural power. There was air enough in the coffin to support a trained man for twenty minutes, and even longer. In fairness to this fakir, I must say that when the lid was removed from the coffin, he showed no signs of having moved the sand covering his face. None the less, judged from a scientific point of view, the demonstration would have been more convincing had the fakir been gagged, and his hands and feet secured so that he was incapable of movement.

Harry Houdini could have emulated this feat with ease. Indeed, on one occasion he did better by submitting to burial in a leaden coffin for an *hour and a half*. The secret is very slow and gentle breathing—and complete immobility.

Tarah Bey claimed that he could go into catalepsy and remain buried for almost any stipulated period—an hour, a day, a week, or a month—provided he was warned beforehand what that period was to be. Now this is a very extraordinary statement, and one that cannot be dismissed as fantastic in view of other evidence that to some extent supports it.

In the early part of 1927, a fakir named Hamid Bey was buried in the ground at Englewood, New Jersey, for a period of no less than *three hours*. This feat was witnessed by a number of prominent and responsible people whose testimony cannot be doubted. How can we explain that a human being whose very life is the oxygen of the air can be buried in the ground for no less than one hundred and eighty minutes? Hamid Bey exhibited no distress on being uncovered—and Harry Houdini, a man of first-class physique and constitution, was not very far from the point of death after his burial of ninety minutes.

Frankly, it is one of those things that we people of the Western worlds cannot explain. Another fakir, Romen Bey, once went into three cataleptic trances in my London office, for periods of five minutes, ten minutes, and a quarter of an hour, as I directed. That, too, is inexplicable, and points to the fact that certain of these

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fakirs, at any rate, possess a physical control and knowledge of which we have very little understanding.

Unless one has a sound knowledge of magical principles, it is almost impossible to detect the fraud from the genuine in the magic of these Eastern fakirs. For instance, one subject I examined claimed the ability to control his pulse. I placed my thumb at his wrist, and, according to my directions, the pulse was strong—or so weak, that it was practically undetectable.

I asked the man to strip and repeat the experiment. He did so, and it was then I tumbled to the trick. I jerked the man's arm above his head. A small square of hard wood fell from beneath his armpit.

I tried this piece of wood on myself, and in two or three days had become quite expert with it. By pressing the upper arm slightly to the side, the wood acts as a *tourniquet*—well known to the medical profession. That is, it presses on the main artery of the arm, and so prevents the blood reaching the wrist. I demonstrated the trick to Houdini, and quite baffled him with it. I believe, too, that on one occasion he used it to mystify a committee of doctors who were examining him prior to one of his dramatic escapes.

Control of the *strength* of the pulse is, however, very different from the control of the *number* of pulse-beats. Both Tarah Bey and Romen Bey were able to vary their pulse from between forty beats a minute to a hundred beats a minute, according to the directions of doctors. Hamid Bey appears to elaborate this process still further. He has been examined by three doctors simultaneously, one listening to the heart, the others feeling his left and right wrists. After a certain period has elapsed, the left wrist will show a pulse of sixty, the heart a beat of eighty, and the right wrist ninety-five beats to the minute, all at the same time.

That, at least, is what a report signed by American experts declares. I must explain that I have not had the opportunity of personally examining Hamid Bey, and that, while I do not say this alleged feat of his is a physical

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impossibility, I am not prepared to accept—or offer—it as genuine. A famous London heart specialist has told me that the feat is utterly impossible. Well, to the open-minded scientific inquirer *nothing* is utterly impossible, though there are things that are highly improbable. I must content myself with that until I have examined Hamid Bey for myself.

Still, I am convinced that the less pretentious heart-controlling feats of such fakirs as Tarah Bey and Romen Bey are genuine enough. Here, again, there is nothing in Western science that can explain them. Anyone can make his heart beat faster by running a short distance, or by quickly mounting a flight of stairs. But these fakirs do this standing still, and according to directions.

In India, there is a Hindu sect known as the Sadhus who indulge in elaborate self-torture in the name of holiness. Some keep an arm raised above the head until the flesh becomes dry like wood, and the nails of the fingers grow a yard or so in length. Others thread fruits, leaves, and tree-shoots into the flesh of their chests, backs, and thighs. Some swing upside down from scaffolding for an entire day, their heads and faces passing over a blazing fire. And there are a few who bury their heads in the ground with their bodies and legs sticking up into the air without any support at all.

What are we to make of all this? It is not enough to call such symptoms of religious fervour fanaticism and madness. The point is—what is it enables these men to endure such self-torture—and yet live? Try holding your left arm above your head. If you keep it erect for five minutes, you have exceptional self-control. Yet Sadhus do it for ten, twenty and twenty-five *years*.

The logical inference to be drawn from this and similar endurance feats is that these men have developed mental powers of which we know nothing. Their minds seem to be very nearly the complete masters of their bodies. The Indian *Yoga* cult, with its ideal of physical and mental purity, is based essentially on these same powers. Advanced *Yoga* students secure a certain measure of

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internal cleanliness by stepping into running water and drawing a yard or more of bowel from their bodies. And, as we have seen, the fakirs can control their hearts in a most bewildering way.

Some fakirs profess to be fire-eaters. But neither Tarah Bey nor Romen Bey were capable of this feat. The two fakirs who have exhibited in America, Rahmen Bey and Hamid Bey, were similarly ungifted.

As a matter of fact, any claim to fire-eating must be regarded with suspicion. The genuine fire-eater is he who will rinse his mouth with cold water, and then allow white-hot coals and embers to be placed on his tongue. I have never met any man who could do this, though many are said to live in the district of the holy city of Benares, India.

The Indian jadoo-wallah is an itinerant conjurer around whom many interesting legends have arisen. He often includes in his restricted programme an exhibition of fire-eating. I know this, because on literally hundreds of occasions I have sent fire-eating apparatus out to India for the use of jadoo-wallahs! It is an old trick that I have performed myself many times, one that any school-boy can do effectively and without the least danger.

A short length of specially prepared string is used. This glows, but does not burst into flame when lighted. It is loosely wrapped round with hemp, and placed in the mouth. Air is taken in slowly through the nostrils and expelled through the mouth: the draught causes a cool flame to spring from the lips, but directly the mouth is closed, the flame is doused.

The average jadoo-wallah has a repertoire of not more than a dozen tricks. These include the cups and balls, the coloured sands, the bobbing duck, the restored rope (or turban), the rice-bowl, ring and stick, boy in the basket, and the mango tree. With the exception of the cups and balls, any conjuring novice could perform these tricks well after a week's hard practice.

The most famous illusion in the world is the Great Indian Rope Trick.

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Briefly, the effect of it is this :

The conjurer sits cross-legged in an open space. He throws one end of a coil of rope into the air ; and about fifteen feet (sometimes twenty or twenty-five) remain stiff, like a pole. A little boy climbs the rope, and balances himself at the extremity. At a word from the conjurer, he entirely vanishes, and is discovered in a basket, or comes running into the crowd from a distant spot. Then, at a signal, the rope crumples to the ground.

There is a more colourful version than this which insists that the conjurer pretends to be angry with the boy. He climbs up the rope with a knife between his teeth, and, on reaching the top, both he and the boy disappear. The most agonizing screams are heard from above : then a leg falls, and an arm, another leg and arm, together with the remainder of the boy's body. The conjurer reappears, and climbs down the rope, covered with blood. He assembles the limbs and trunk, which at once become complete and alive. The rope crumples, and is packed away in a basket.

Now, even without this rather horrible embellishment, this is a very wonderful trick. Many a Western magician would give a fortune to know its secret—myself included. In the past, I have offered 5,000 dollars to anyone who could show me the trick under the prescribed conditions, and I willingly repeat this offer here and now. As a spectacle in modern vaudeville, the Rope Trick would be worth no less than 2,000,000 dollars.

Let us, first of all, examine the evidence *against* the Rope Trick, the case being that it does not, and never did, exist.

If it does exist, it is worked by methods completely unknown to Western magic and science. There is no known civilized system which will reproduce the illusion as described, even though it be performed in a theatre and not on open ground. I make this statement without qualification whatsoever, and back it with my lifetime's experience of magical invention and construction.

(I should add here that two ingenious copies of the

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Rope Trick have been performed on the stage—by David Devant in England, and Howard Thurston in America. In Devant's version, the "rope" was not really a rope at all, and was standing erect when the audience first saw it. In both stage versions were several essential differences from the trick as I have described it.)

From time to time, several famous Western magicians have been to India to investigate the trick. They have not only never seen the trick, but—and this is more to the point—*they never met anybody who had seen it*. Such men as Charles Bertram, Murray, Houdini, and John Mulholland, the leading society magician of the United States, have travelled east of Suez, and come back empty-handed.

Mulholland made some particularly careful investigations into the trick. He searched the Imperial Library at Calcutta for a record of a feast given by the Emperor Jehangir, father of the builder of the Taj Mahal, at which the Rope Trick is supposed to have been performed.

The document disclosed that the foremost Indian magician of the time (about A.D. 1600) performed at the feast, but there is no word concerning the Rope Trick.

Another point of considerable significance is that although for many years past Western magicians have offered considerable rewards for a *sight* of the Rope Trick (not the secret !), no single reward has ever been claimed. And the men who are said to perform the trick are poor, nomadic conjurers.

One could quote numerous instances of creditable witnesses who have spent years in India, yet who have never seen the Rope Trick. Let us content ourselves with the words of Major L. H. Branson, a gifted magician who spent a quarter of a century in India, with the Indian Army :

"I maintain that the trick has never been performed out of doors. That is to say that a rope thrown up into the air has not remained suspended in mid-air, nor has any boy ever climbed up it. That when at the top he has not disappeared, and that after his disappearance

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he did not come down in bits, covered with blood or otherwise."

That, then, will complete our case for the prosecution. For the defence, we will quote witnesses, though I must stress the fact that none of the witnesses are known to me. This is what Sir Ralph Pearson, of Thame, Oxfordshire, England, says :

" In the Spring of 1900, when in the West Khandesa District of the Bombay Presidency, I saw the trick carried out on the then recently constructed Tapiti Valley Railway. . . . After the necessary shouting and beating of his legs and chest, the conjurer threw up the rope some ten feet in the air, after which the boy swarmed nearly to the top. . . . My wife told me she had also seen the trick done, in company with her brother, his wife and children, at another wayside station further down the line."

Here is Mr. George S. Crinks, a retired seaman, now living at Plymouth, England :

" I was an A.B. on board the barque Chili, of Dundee, and while at Calcutta discharging molasses in January, 1898, the Rope Trick was performed by an Indian (coolie) on the deck of the ship in the presence of the whole crew and with a piece of the ship's rope."

In 1903, the Rope Trick is said to have been performed before 200 boys on the playing-field of the Victoria School, Kurseong, near Darjeeling. After the performance, the headmaster described it as " a wonderful exhibition of mass hypnotism and ventriloquism ". In 1912, it was demonstrated on the parade ground at Malappuram, Malabar.

Other witnesses who contend that the Rope Trick is not only a reality, but that they have seen it, are Mrs. Frances Odhams, of Wimbledon, England ; Mr. C. Whitaker, of Lingfield, England ; Mr. Maurice Prowse, of Weymouth, England ; and Messrs. Arthur Young, Annaji Rao, and K. Mahadevan, all of India. There are doubtless others whose names and testimony have not been brought to my notice. I am not admitting the evidence of Ibn Batutah, the first man ever to mention the Rope

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Trick (A.D. 1324) whose descriptions are altogether too incredible.

The way is now clear for our star witness. Dr. Alexander Cannon, K.C.A., M.D., Ph.D., M.A., an official of the London County Council Mental Hospital Service, says that he has not only seen the Rope Trick, but that he can perform it.

"I can produce the Rope Trick in the Albert Hall, London. . . . I shall require a large quantity of sand from a certain area, certain lighting, as it were from the sun, certain heating arrangements, and, under these circumstances, everyone can see the phenomenon."

A group of British magicians expressed their anxiety to see the trick performed by Dr. Cannon, and their willingness to assist him in procuring the right conditions at the Albert Hall. To this offer, the doctor answered :

"Providing you are willing to lay down enough money to bring over a shipload of special sand, to heat up the Albert Hall to tropical temperature, and to produce my own tropical lighting—and also to place with a bank £50,000 (250,000 dollars) to be handed over to me as soon as I have produced the phenomenon, I will do it."

One feels a little disappointment at this. But worse is to come. The magicians asked Dr. Cannon to give them a banker's guarantee to return the £50,000 and to pay all expenses if he failed to produce the phenomenon. It is stated that he refused these conditions ; at any rate, nothing has been done.

So we must dispense with this witness. But there is a further piece of evidence that has come to hand in England during the past twelve months. A magician living at Cheltenham, Gloucester, claims to be able to perform the Rope Trick. He has performed it several times already, though he has not yet completely mastered it, and consequently cannot guarantee success on every occasion.

As though to consolidate this claim, some photographs were taken of the trick in operation, and widely published in British newspapers.

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Let it be said that the photographs—as photographs—were convincing. I wondered whether, after all, I was going to lose my 5,000 dollars. But, alas!—it transpired that the rope was actually held aloft by a wire slung between two trees, and quite invisible in the negative. The business was explained away as a “joke”.

Since cross-examination has dealt somewhat unkindly with the two main defence witnesses, we are left to consider the evidence of the others.

What are we to make of these statements? Are the witnesses liars? Frankly, I do not think they are. What have they to gain by lying? I think that if it were possible to sift down their evidence, to produce corroborative statements as to time, places, and circumstances, we should find there is truth in their words.

The problem is, without the necessary corroboration, to decide what degree of truth there is in them. In conditions of extreme heat such as exist in India, delusion is not uncommon. I am not suggesting that it is possible to *imagine* the Rope Trick being performed where *nothing* was performed at all. But I do believe—indeed, I *know*—that one can imagine one sees much more than is actually happening.

That, at any rate, is my own explanation of these statements. I think it possible that at the stated dates and places, some version of the traditional Rope Trick was performed. Probably a mechanical rod, covered with rope, was made to stand in the air. Given this, I think much of the rest was hallucination, induced probably by atmospheric conditions, and the distance of the witness from the performer.

At any rate, there is no denying that the weight of scientific evidence—and for that matter, common sense—is heavily against the Rope Trick.

Lastly, I might say I do *not* believe in the theory of mass hypnotism. In my earlier days, I did a good deal of hypnotism, and my experience has shown me that the hypnotizing of a single subject is difficult enough, and sometimes quite impossible if he or she is unwilling.

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I have never met a hypnotist who was capable of influencing two persons simultaneously, let alone a crowd. If one may be permitted the use of the word *impossible*, it is surely applicable here.

Many wonderful things have been brought from east of Suez, but I have yet to be convinced that mass hypnotism and the true Indian Rope Trick are amongst them.

Howard Thurston's mystic inspiration came to him at the age of seven years, when he witnessed two performances by Herrmann the Great, in his home town of Columbus, Ohio. He resolved then and there to become a devotee of the mystic art.

But Thurston's parents had other plans. They were deeply religious, and destined their son for the ministry, so in time they sent him to Dwight L. Moody's college in Northfield, Mass. Young Thurston, however, had his doubts as to his fitness for a clerical calling, and finally compromised by saying that he would become a medical missionary.

At the age of nineteen he left Northfield, intending to go to Philadelphia, to begin the study of medicine. He proceeded as far as Albany, where he found that Herrmann the Great was to appear that night at a local theatre. Thurston decided to remain over and attend the performance. Herrmann went from Albany to Syracuse, and so infatuated was Thurston that he was a passenger on the same train, and secured a seat in the parlour car directly opposite the great magician, but not so much as a word passed between them during the journey.

Thurston sat in a front seat at Herrmann's performance in Syracuse, and then, as his funds were running low, he proceeded to Detroit, where his parents were then living. A little later he made his actual debut as a magician, as a street performer in Wyandotte, Mich., where he alternated selling potato-peelers with tricks in magic.

Thurston's first real engagement was with Sells Bros.' Circus, at the munificent salary of six dollars a week.

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In addition to putting on an act in magic, he acted as an announcer for the side-show and made himself generally useful, but, in spite of all the hard work entailed, he declares that it was the happiest moment in his life when he found himself on the circus train, actually engaged as a magician.

Thurston enjoyed many adventures and experiences, but made little money in the next several years. On one occasion he was filling an engagement in a combination dance hall and gambling house in a Western mining-camp. He was performing the rising card trick, using a glass goblet as a houlette, when a stray bullet fired by a drunken miner struck the glass in his hand and shattered it to fragments. This, of course, disarranged all of his preparations for performing the trick, but he feared that if he disappointed his audience the next bullet might be aimed at the performer, so on the spur of the moment he devised a new and better way of producing the trick.

Thurston's third meeting with Alexander Herrmann occurred in Denver, some time after the mining-camp episode, and on this occasion he had the satisfaction of presenting his new method of rising cards in the presence of the master magician, who confessed he was baffled by it. The Denver papers gave several columns of publicity to the affair, and Thurston felt that his fortune was made. He had but a few dollars in his pocket, and most of his money was promptly invested in postage stamps. Then he went around to the hotels and cafés, and gathered up copies of the newspapers that people had thrown away, and mailed them to theatrical agents in all parts of the country, serenely confident that the story of "The Man Who Mystified Herrmann" would bring him immediate engagements.

He waited in vain, however, as the stories in the Denver papers made little impression upon agents or managers. Then he finally made his way to New York, where he went from manager to manager, and from agent to agent, without the slightest encouragement, until one day, in sheer desperation, he forced his way

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into the office of an agent, shutting the door behind him, and insisting that he be permitted to perform some of his tricks then and there.

"Oh! but I've seen it all a hundred times!" said the agent wearily.

"But you haven't seen me a hundred times," retorted Thurston. "You haven't seen me once, but you're going to see me now."

As a reward of this persistence, he was given a week's engagement at Tony Pastor's. He opened at a matinée performance, and, after arriving at the theatre dead broke, discovered that he had left the vest of his threadbare dress-suit at his lodgings. As the time was short, and he had no money for car-fare, he ran most of the way between the theatre and his lodgings, returning breathless and exhausted, but having to go upon the stage almost immediately. He was nervous, and gave a wretched performance. Fearing that he might be barred from appearing at the evening performance, he sneaked from the theatre in despair. But he returned that night determined to do his best, and when he left the stage at the finish of his act, Tony Pastor met him in the wings with words of encouragement. How much this meant to him, he relates in the following language:

"Since then I have gone all over the world, have played before kings; have sometimes received as much as \$5,000 a week; but no other recognition has meant as much to me as Tony Pastor's arm over my shoulder, and his kindly assurance that I had 'done well'."

Howard Thurston is, without exception, the greatest magician in the United States.

It is many years now since he last appeared in England, but there are many who will recall the sensation he caused on his first appearance in London at the beginning of the present century. It was he, in company with Nelson Downs, the coin manipulator, Houdini, with his remarkable escapes, and Horace Goldin, with his illusions, who first introduced novelty magic on a large scale in this country. Thurston appeared then as a card

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manipulator, and his front and back palming of cards was a revelation to English audiences. To-day that form of conjuring is classed more as jugglery, but thirty years ago it was welcomed as an entirely new departure from the stereotyped ideas of English magicians.

Not long before he came here, Harry Kellar, the leading American magician of the time, had asked my advice on Thurston's capabilities as a magician. Kellar, who was considering retirement, was looking for a successor to carry on his act. His first choice had fallen on Paul Valadon of the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, but the partnership failed mainly on account of Valadon's violent temper. I told Kellar that I thought Thurston the best man in the world to take Valadon's place. A few years later Thurston and Kellar reached an agreement, and I believe that neither had reason to regret it. Thurston is reputed to be the richest magician in the world at the present time.

When he arrived in England he carried some posters pointing himself out as the magician who mystified Herrmann. In America, where Herrmann's capabilities were known, these would have stamped him at once as a magician of high repute; in England, where Herrmann had never performed, they counted for nothing. Consequently, Thurston started his English engagements with none of the preliminary "boosting" which often counts for so much. But, as luck would have it, his worth as a magician was appreciated after his first performance. In a single night he built up an English reputation where a lesser magician would have proved a complete failure. After his London bookings had been fulfilled, Thurston toured the provinces, introducing a number of new effects into his act. When he finally returned to the United States he had a reputation comparable to either Maskelyne or Houdini.

I know, perhaps, less of the personal side of Howard Thurston than of most other great magicians of our time. To me, he always appears to be terribly overworked. I believe he was originally intended for the Church, and

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his appearance would have suited him admirably to this calling. If he wears an expression that is a little tired and troubled, he suggests also an infinite amount of patience, and a kindliness that is little short of piety. He is always neatly dressed, but somehow you gain the quite illogical impression that he can ill afford to spend much money on his clothes.

His manner of address is never bombastic or boastful. He is one of the few magicians I have met who know how to combine first-class showmanship with commendable modesty. That, I think, is an inherent gift which cannot be acquired by practice or experience. There is only one contradiction in his pleasant, simple nature. Howard Thurston will think nothing of spending really large sums of money, especially in connection with his illusions. Yet, on the smaller sums, the cents and the shillings, he likes to drive a bargain. He is not *mean* in the generally accepted sense of the word ; he is just *careful*. It is a characteristic which has probably done much to establish him amongst the best of living magicians.

CHAPTER XVI

MAGIC IN OTHER COUNTRIES

MAGIC, as we understand it to-day, has for centuries been considered an amusement particular to the Western world. England and the United States are the acknowledged homes of magic ; and if priority must be given, then England has it. Magicians were roaming England's dusty lanes, performing in her market-places and fair-grounds, many years before Columbus set out on his historic voyage from Lisbon.

To attempt to trace the birthplace of magic would be a tiresome—indeed, a hopeless—task. Ancient Rome had her conjurers, and clever fellows they were, too. Before them, there were skilled magicians in Greece called priests, who used their knowledge of magical principles to consolidate their power over the people. Going back further still, we know there existed magicians of sorts in Egypt. A 3,500-years-old manuscript in the British Museum describes a magical performance given by a priest before King Khufu ; and it is probable that in the religious cults of the Nile valley modern magic had its birth. But how or when this occurred we shall never know, for the darkness of more than fifty centuries lies between that time and now.

There are some who believe the birthplace of magic is China. I do not propose to set down the many reasons why I disagree with such a view. I am aware that magic has existed in China for some thousands of years, but I think no really useful purpose can be served in arguing the pros and cons of this case. To be frank, I am more interested in considering the trend of magic in the

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countries of the world during my own time ; for here, at any rate, I am on certain ground.

Modern magic owes a good deal to China, to be sure. For centuries past, Chinese magicians have specialized in *production* tricks, and some remarkably fine things they have given us. The traditional skirt costume of the Chinese mandarin is splendidly suited for the purpose of concealment. There is, in fact, nothing to equal it, either in capacity or convenience. Bowls of water, numerous flags, animals, and even children can be accommodated without arousing suspicion. In the famous trick that established Lafayette's reputation in Britain, the Chinese skirt was used to produce two children from a cylinder, no traps or secret appliances of any sort being used. The effect was perfect.

In *More Exclusive Magical Secrets*, I have explained the entire Chinese system of magic, and those interested in this branch of entertainment will find all the principles set down there. Incidentally, the best illusion that has ever come out of China is not a production effect. It is known as "The Fountain", and can best be described as juggling with a spray of water. For instance, the magician will suddenly spout water from his head, touch the spray with his finger, and transfer it to the tip of his fan. From there he will apply it to his elbow, his foot, or his fingers. It will then be passed on to an assistant ; and with a large company of performers, each in turn spouting and passing sprays from one to the other, the effect is amazing and extremely beautiful.

Of the many Chinese magicians I have met, I think the finest is Long Tack Sam. Sam is master of a most spectacular programme, a mélange of Oriental and occidental magic. He commands big money in the United States, though I imagine his salary does not compare with that earned by Chung Ling Soo before the War. Still, Soo was really a Scots-American, and a genius into the bargain. Sam is genuine Chinese.

There are thousands of itinerant street conjurers in China, but, magically speaking, they are insignificant.

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Their repertoire is small, and their tricks very ordinary. Production of paper from the mouth, from hats, little feats of palming with cards and coins are the mainstay of their programmes, and their living must be difficult. There appear to be no high-class magicians comparable with the best men in England and America. Such few magical societies as exist are extremely exclusive, most of the members being amateurs of good-class families. Until recent years, no attention was paid to Western ideas in magic, but now—probably in some measure due to the successes of Long Tack Sam—this state of affairs is being remedied. The day has passed when the East could be regarded as the fount of all knowledge, and I am afraid until Chinese magicians have assimilated that fact, their magic will not be of any great consequence to the world.

China's near neighbour, Japan, has contributed even less to the sum of magic. For countless ages, the Japanese have specialized in juggling, which is not magic in the real sense at all. Their sense of balance is probably finer than that of any other people in the world, and some of the foot-juggling feats I have seen performed by Japs are quite beyond the accomplishments of any Western performers.

Considering that Japan did not open her frontiers to foreign visitors until the middle of the nineteenth century, and that up to this time she was a country of mediæval learning and customs, it is not surprising that she has had so little to teach us in the way of magic. Her account, however, is not entirely blank. She has produced one very fine magician, and one very fine trick. Ten Ischi is the magician in question, and the "Thumb Tie", which he introduced to Europe and America at the beginning of the present century, is one of the most baffling effects ever seen upon a Western stage. In this, the performer's thumbs are crossed and tied by a member of the audience. Hoops thrown into the air are caught by the performer on his arms, although the knot remains intact. The principle involved in this trick was something quite new, and was

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very quickly imitated by Western performers. I think the finest exponent of the "Thumb Tie" was Arnold de Biere, who made it seem an absolute miracle.

Recently, Western magic has become very popular with the Japanese, and a number of European professionals have made some profitable tours of the larger towns of Japan in the past ten or fifteen years. My friend Chefalo, the Italian, tells me the appetite for magic of the Japanese working people is quite insatiable, and the one objection he has to touring Japan is that it is such hard work. On occasions he has been through his programme six times in a single day, and still left hundreds of people unsatisfied.

At Tokyo, a club for amateur magicians has been formed, and from what I can glean from the official organ of this society, it would appear that its members are devoted entirely to Western magic. The club meets twice monthly, and its public performances are extremely popular. That there is scope for such a society is a healthy sign, and I firmly believe there is a fine future for magic of all types in Japan.

Eastwards from Japan lies the Pacific and Polynesia, that vast collection of islands whose magic, at its best, is of the ju-ju variety. So we must turn to the West—to India. Now, it has long been my opinion that India possesses a quite unjustifiable reputation for magic. The fakirs are undoubtedly in some part responsible for this—but is the genuine fakir a magician or a physical and mental freak? Such fakirs as I have known lay no claim to be magicians in the way that Horace Goldin is a magician. On the other hand, they do claim certain occult powers which Goldin admittedly does not possess. It is with this fakir "magic" that I have no concern. I cannot criticize it because I have had so little experience of it, and such manifestations of it as I have witnessed certainly could not be included under the term "magic" as I, and, I presume, my reader, understands it.

The fakirs apart, then, what is there left for our consideration? Very little, I am afraid. As in China, there

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are numerous itinerant conjurers in India. These men, known as jadoo-wallahs, perform expertly, but their tricks, generally speaking, are of the simple fire-eating brand, and their repertoires are small. Conjuring with the simple Indian native is a family trade, just as leather-working and brass-turning are trades, and the "valuable secrets" are passed from father to son. The best trick of the jadoo-wallah is probably the cups and balls, of which the walnut shells and pea swindle, often to be seen on race-courses, is an adaptation. It is a sleight, and not altogether an easy one. But an enthusiastic English schoolboy could probably master it within a week, and become a really competent performer in a fortnight.

The Hindu caste system does not leave the simple conjurer to earn his living exactly as he wishes. The street performers are drawn from the lowest caste of all—the "Untouchables". But the magician who performs the famous "Mango Tree", and can produce a live chicken from your ear or your pocket, is socially (and, by virtue of "caste", spiritually) higher. This type of conjurer usually has a definite "pitch" to work in, and prefers to perform "by request". And in justice, let it be said that he is a superior magician to his nomadic brother. The mango tree, effected by shoots concealed in the clothing, and a mussel-shell secretly buried in the mound of earth, calls for nice judgment and good misdirection. The chicken production is the story of misdirection over again. These tricks are simple, but, being sleights, require practice. And when you have seen them, you have seen the best that India can offer you in the way of honest native magic.

No, I have not forgotten the Rope Trick. I have dealt with this in the previous chapter.

Native performers are very rarely seen at the theatres in India. In certain propaganda that has been laid before me from time to time, it has been gently hinted that a colour bar is unconditionally raised when a native artiste applies for engagements. This is not true. The fact is that native magicians are simply not good enough,

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and while they are content to perform at street corners, no sensible person is likely to pay to watch them in a theatre. European and American magicians are very popular in the cities, and performers of the quality of Bertram, Goldin, Howard Thurston, Chung Ling Soo, Chefalo, and Murray have performed there.

So much, then, for what may be termed the East. We must turn now to Europe; and the first country of real importance on our westward journey is Italy. Now, it is a curious fact that although a "first-class power" and a highly civilized country, Italy, magically speaking, is a negligible quantity. Two thousand years ago, she led the world in such magic as then existed. To-day, the Italian people have a very real interest in magic, as any of the professional performers who have played there will tell you. There are thousands of exceedingly competent amateurs in the country, and a number of well-organized magical societies. But there are no great professionals.

Chefalo is undoubtedly the best magician Italy has produced. But it is important to remember that this fine performer learnt his magic in the United States and Great Britain. There is nothing particularly nationalized about his performance; and I think he has never been aware of racial influence in his work. Perhaps this may seem like splitting hairs, for Chefalo is a true Italian by temperament as well as by birth. Further, it would be hard to say his act is definitely non-Italian in style, for the very good reason that there is no accepted style of Italian magic—unless, indeed, Chefalo himself has established it. But I do know that his act, cleverly individualized though it is, shows definite traces of his English and American education in magic. It is for this reason that I regard him as belonging more to ourselves in magic than to Italy.

If Italy may be termed magically backward, then Spain is wellnigh non-existent. No single first-class magician has ever emerged from the Spanish people for the simple reason that, as a nation, they are temperamentally antag-

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onistic to magic. Your Spaniard does not like to feel he is being fooled, and is apt to become annoyed if he feels that something is being "put over" on him. In short, he lacks a sense of humour. Magic has never been afforded the opportunity to prosper in Spain, and the professional magicians who have performed there invariably report mediocre business.

In Germany, Austria, and Hungary, magic is in a good state. In those three countries there are numerous flourishing magical societies, many of which have been in existence since before the War. Austria's greatest contribution to world magic has been Dr. Johann Hofzinsner, of Vienna, a true magical genius of the early nineteenth century. Hofzinsner's inventions are brilliant, and although many of them were destroyed on his death, there still exist something like a hundred, including thirty very fine card tricks. Ottokar Fischer is the author of a clever book on Hofzinsner's tricks.

The Great Lafayette was a German, being born at Munich in 1872 as Siegmund Neuberger. But he, like Chefalo, learnt most of his magic abroad, and cannot, in a magical sense, be regarded as a true son of his country. Probably the greatest of the true German magicians is Ernst Thorn, a brilliant illusionist, who enjoyed several years of prosperity in Europe before the War. Since his time, no great German performer has arisen, and undoubtedly the many changes in the economic and political structures of post-war Germany have something to do with this. But one may come, for there are plenty of enthusiastic amateurs in the country to draw from.

After England and America, the country of the greatest magical significance is France. This great country has given us Robert Houdon and Beautier de Kolta, to say nothing of the immortal Chevalier Pinetti. To trace the influence of these three, to show what their example has meant to the magicians that have followed them, would require many more pages than this volume contains. They were all great men, men whose names will be remembered as long as magic is performed. There are

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two first-class magical societies in France, and the amateur performers are numerous and attain a high standard of efficiency.

May their numbers and their skill continue to increase !

